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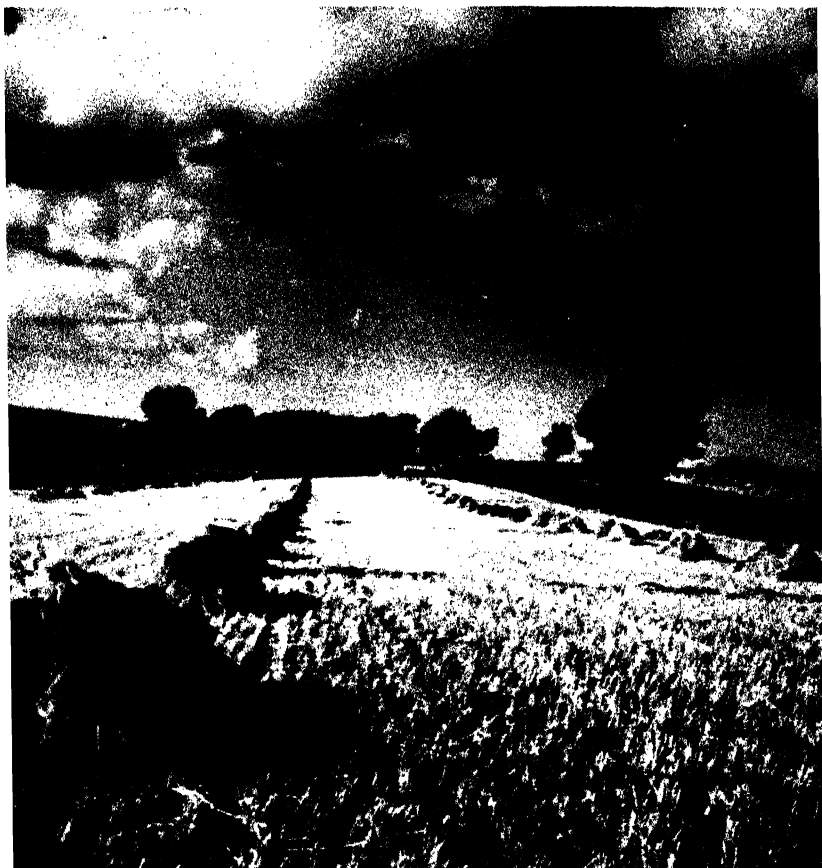
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# SUMMER LANDSCAPE



*Harvest Fields in Denmark*



*MONICA REDLICH*



# SUMMER LANDSCAPE

DENMARK - ENGLAND - U.S.A.



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TO MY FRIENDS WHO APPEAR  
IN THIS BOOK

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All the other photographs are by the author.

# PART I





# I

NEW YORK, THURSDAY

This is Manhattan, I'm looking out of a sixth-floor window, and I am at home. The view I'm looking at is full of interest, but no aspect of it seems more extraordinary to me than the fact that I no longer find it extraordinary. Even as recently as five years ago, a skyscraper was just something so tall that I didn't know how to imagine it; the City and State of New York were one and the same, Manhattan was the name of a cocktail which I did not like, and Park Avenue meant vast, gleaming palaces inhabited by Hollywood heroines.

By now, however, I feel that New York has put me through its course for beginners. The skyscrapers have differentiated themselves into separate individuals, with distinctive silhouettes and personalities. Having been up a hundred and two storeys to the top of the Empire State Building, I realize the full insignificance of living only on the sixth floor; having travelled for nine hours to see Niagara Falls, and found when we got out at Buffalo that we were still in New York State, I realize that the Empire State is a name with a meaning. I'm actually looking down into Park Avenue now; but this apartment of ours, pleasant though we think it, doesn't seem to me to be at all the kind of thing that a film heroine would fancy, and we are surrounded with just the same books as we had in London and Copenhagen.

But here I am, a Park Avenue cliff-dweller like thousands of others, looking out at the view from the window. I see a long, straight avenue, so broad that it looks spacious even though it is lined with fifteen-storey buildings. I don't think of these buildings as skyscrapers any more; they are just the places where other people live. It is only when I notice the little froth of green trees about their ankles that I remember how tall they really are.

Up on the top of all these desirable residences, around the water-towers, live the very grand people, in penthouses, with plants to water. Down on the ground floor all the doctors' consulting-rooms are clustered, a dozen or more to each building. I often think of the endless series of ill and worried people who take their place behind those expressionless street-level windows. On all the storeys in between, each neatly inhabiting its separate

shelf just as we do here, live New York families, for two and a half miles on each side of the street—from Grand Central Station at 42nd Street up to 96th Street where the railway comes out into the open. It must add up to quite a large population.

All up and down these miles of apartment-houses (I dare not even to myself think of them as "flats" over here), one to each canopied entrance, stand the doormen in uniform: cap and heavy overcoat in the winter, grey shirtsleeves in the summer, that being the range of wardrobe which this climate requires of us. I can see one or two of them now, in their spring outfits. They must yawn a good deal, I dare say, when no one is looking, but when anybody comes to their doorway they open car doors, whistle for taxis, talk about the weather, and are in general indispensable in the Park Avenue routine.

And all up and down the Avenue, and crowding the side-streets as well, I see the long rows of glossy, overfed-looking automobiles, which often seem to me to constitute in themselves a large and quick-witted section of the inhabitants of the U.S.A. From my sixth-floor vantage-point I seldom see a driver or a passenger, except at the pavement immediately opposite. I see these high-velocity beetles, black, or grey or (if they are taxis) bright yellows and orange, whizzing cleverly up and down the broad street, stopping for a red light, nosing their way impatiently past slower or more foolish beetles, banging stationary beetles in the fender if they want them out of the way. I've seen, from the very tall skyscrapers, beetles in bright-coloured rows on the roofs of buildings, enjoying the air, as it might be. It would not be difficult to imagine a day when, no longer content with the roof, they might become householders and start coming up with one in the elevator, getting off at the floor below with the happy jingle of a home-coming latchkey.

Opposite our windows is a church with a white-pillared portico, a graceful building, but small in comparison with its neighbours. We are extremely glad to have it there to look down on to, not only for its own sake but also because it gives us a good large piece of open sky. We can see sunsets from here, and watch the stars move: amenities which are by no means standard equipment in a Manhattan apartment. A church spire has loomed large in my window-landscape almost everywhere I have ever lived. Boston Stump in Lincolnshire gave me a noble start, and in later years

*View from a Window,  
New York*



*View from a  
Window,  
Leicestershire*

I have had neighbours ranging from the unassuming belfry of Little Bowden in Leicestershire to St. Mary Abbots in Kensington, with its wild outburst of bell-ringing practice on Monday evenings, and the green-and-gold spire of Our Saviour's in Copenhagen which could scatter an entire concert around on the bright Danish air. I always enjoyed having a church spire to look up at, but I have never before been in a position to look down upon one as we do here, and it still upsets my sense of perspective.

Today I feel that I must scan Park Avenue with particular care, since this afternoon I begin my summer holiday by the fairly decisive step of flying the Atlantic. The next windows from which I look out with any sense of permanence will, if all goes well, be those of an English country rectory, offering by way of view a choice of the drive gate, the lane, the church, the tennis-court, and the railway. I foresee also windows in London, in Worcestershire, in Surrey; in Copenhagen and right across Denmark to parts of Jutland where I have never been before. There will be a lot of looking to be done in the months ahead.

My luggage is ready. It has taken me ten days or more, I think, to select my sixty-six lbs., weighing out on the kitchen scales a judicious mixture of summer and winter clothing, of lightweight trifles for gifts, and indispensable heavy shoes, of camera film and suitably assorted notebooks. Ten days seems a long time, but this holiday, planned many months ago, is now also having to function as convalescence after a major operation, and strength is in short supply. However, I just think to myself at intervals, "summer holiday". No power on earth, apparently, can ever stop one from expecting every summer holiday to be both summer and a holiday, no matter how much evidence to the contrary may accumulate with the years. In my mind's eye I can see the English countryside bathed in summer sun, the Danish countryside bathed in summer sun, myself lazing (the height of my ambition just now) in a deck-chair on a green lawn. No macintoshes; I am taking one, of course, but only as a form of insurance. Every day will be perfect for taking photographs, and when summer is over we shall return to this view to find New York bathed in the sunlight of its most agreeable season, the Indian summer. Sigurd tries at intervals to warn me against over-optimism, but with less and less hope. The only thing experience has taught me in this matter is that (in cold and sober fact) the looking forward may turn out to



*Church in Leicestershire*



*Church on Park Avenue*

be the best part of the whole holiday ; so for that reason as well as because I cannot help it, here I am wandering from my luggage to the windows and back again (there might be an ounce to spare for an extra roll of film), and thinking that in less than twenty-four hours I shall probably be in England. Lunch at home here today, lunch at home in England tomorrow . . . and crossing the Atlantic tonight I shall lose five hours of my life : five hours which I can never hope to live until we get a present of them, all out of season, on our westbound crossing in September. Existence is very interesting, and not least just before the start of one's summer holiday.

#### SOMEWHERE OVER LABRADOR, THURSDAY

The change of scene from Manhattan to Leicestershire is a fairly dramatic one, as I know ; but for a thoroughgoing contrast to either of them I have only to look out of the window of the plane at this moment. We are *en route* for Goose Bay, Labrador. My watch says 8.30 p.m., which may or may not be the correct time in this bit of the world. It is less than four hours since I said good-bye to Sigurd at Idlewild Airport.

Gander is the usual stop before crossing the Atlantic, but so far I have never managed to get there. The last time I flew to England we also had to miss it out because of bad weather, and then, as now, we were informed that we were going to stop at Goose Bay, Labrador, instead. The name meant nothing to me then. It does now, though. Our machine was stranded there for more than twenty-four hours, after trouble in the air (over these very mountains) which might have meant serious danger, but which was handled with extreme coolness and courage by the crew. We got out of the plane at Goose Bay into bitterly cold darkness, with snow underfoot, and rattled off through the night in an unheated bus to an unknown destination, a group of puzzled strangers. The next day or so were like the plot of a rather artificial novel. Shut up together in a primitive hotel, we all discovered with considerable speed which of the available people we liked and which we didn't, and became clever at avoiding the latter in spite of living in a herd. The women and children slept comfortably enough in a long wooden dormitory, and our air-hostess borrowed two pairs of snow-boots from the kitchen staff so that we could

take turns at going out for nice brisk walks in the snow. There was nothing to see but snow and fir-trees, and more snow and fir-trees, and more snow and fir-trees. Any novel-reviewer could be happily sarcastic about the improbability of the characters thrown together up there. There was a good-hearted, dumpy, cheerful blonde woman, for instance, who turned out to be a bicycle trapeze artist; she was amazingly kind to an old blind Finnish peasant, who was being sent home from the U.S.A. to end his days in his own country. There was a stout young woman who was very gay and a thin schoolmistress who wasn't, and a traveller for lemonade who told me some scarcely credible facts about lassoing lions up trees.

To return to the present—and quickly, before the light fades out there: we are flying above wrinkly, snow-covered mountains, apparently unending, with a sunset of fantastic beauty spread out all over the sky. It is one of those sunsets that range in delicate gradations through every possible colour of the spectrum, and a few impossible ones. Much as I love it, it annoys me, for it is exactly like certain Connecticut sunsets which I very foolishly tried to paint in oils once, with a prodigious lack of success.

As I gaze and gaze at the colours, a wonderful little snippet of moon suddenly flings itself into the midst of them, like a clean fingernail. Fascinated, I call my neighbour's attention to it. She says angrily that I ought never to have done such a thing. Now she has seen the new moon through glass, and what with all the thirteens she's already met today, there's no telling what may happen. So I am abashed, and shall keep my raptures to myself henceforward.

The sun has been below the horizon for some time now, but the colours are still bright. When we crossed the mouth of the St. Lawrence it was already low in the west. It took us fifteen minutes, even at the speed of this aircraft, to cross that shining expanse of estuary. After the St. Lawrence I began to notice the mountains. Black wrinkles at first, like an endless sheet of crumpled dark paper that had been ineffectively smoothed out. Then a little snow appeared on some of the wrinkles, as if someone had been spilling sugar about. Then the sun went down with an almost audible bang, in a final outburst of red and orange flames; and at the exact moment when it went down (truth beating fiction easily once again—no novelist would dare to arrange it so—) our plane



crossed the snow-line, from a landscape of black, white, and flame to a land of pure whiteness lit by the delicate afterglow.

We are a funny-looking crowd on this plane—but then, every plane-load I have ever seen has looked a funny crowd. It seems to belong. I remind myself frequently that each individual passenger is to himself or herself the absolute norm, average, ordinary, acting precisely in the way which ought to be expected from a man or woman travelling on a plane to Europe. To them I may seem most extraordinary. That I find very hard to believe—I feel so average as to be practically invisible; nevertheless, it must obviously be a fact. The feathered hat worn by the woman in front, now. . . . No, she must think it both beautiful and appropriate. I wonder if she means to keep it on all night. Opposite is a younger woman with the improbable combination of a very large Bible and a still larger hat rather the shape of an iced cake, done in frothy pink and white net. She, like me, keeps looking out at the view and being inspired by it, and jotting things down. I wish I dared ask if we might exchange the fruits of our inspiration, but I dare not. Anyway, her elderly neighbour is asleep.

People keep going downstairs to the bar—an extraordinary thought, up here over those desolate mountains. The Indian in front of me, who is trying to doze, has once again let down his chair-back smartly on to my knees. The hostess passes by with her immaculate smile. The chubby American girl (a Pre-Teen-Ager, I imagine, rather than a Sub-Debutante) is indefatigably running up the aisle again, either to go to the Ladies' Room or to fetch another magazine from the rack. It must be nearly time for Goose Bay.

#### LITTLE BOWDEN RECTORY, FRIDAY.

The journey is safely over. I am looking out of my bedroom window on to the drive, the gate, the lawn with the see-saw, the hedge, the tall trees. . . . It is all just as I had imagined. The sun is shining. This is England, the English Midlands, Leicestershire, the village of Little Bowden on the outskirts of Market Harborough. Every little sight and sound in and around the Rectory is completely familiar to me. In a way I might have been here for years, undisturbed; in a way I am still in New York.



*Little Bowden Rectory*



*Sir Isaac Newton's Birthplace*

They had tea ready when I got here, of course. That is always known to be the first essential when I am expected home. Tea in Little Bowden today, tea (only it was coffee) with Sigurd yesterday at Idlewild Airport. My fears were unnecessary, for we had no unscheduled delays at Goose Bay, Labrador. We just spent an hour or so hanging about in the usual dreary manner, and then (to my considerable relief) were marched out of the internment hut, or whatever they call it, across the scrunchy snow and back into our nice warm plane.

In the study, in the kitchen, in the dining-room, all over the place, the family is waiting to talk to me. I can hear the different sounds which indicate where everybody is. This is no time for notebooks or gazing out of the window. I must go and talk.

#### LATER

It is quite dark now in Leicestershire—dark and cold. Hoarse from much conversation, and well aware that I have been done out of five hours' sleep, I lean briefly out of my familiar window before going to bed. There is a delicious smell of earth—Leicestershire earth, my nose insists, not to be confused for a moment with Surrey earth, or Worcestershire earth, or even the earth of the next-door county of Rutland. I can also smell the night-smell of grass, and, of course, the smoke from the railway. There are the customary sounds. A train has just roared past, and is clattering away into the distance, say at Great Bowden or thereabouts. There are cars on the London road. It must be just after closing-time at the *Cherry Tree* and the *Greyhound*, for I hear several sets of footsteps in the lane, and a bicycle, and the sound of hearty Leicestershire good nights.

This morning (by my time, anyway) I was looking out of the aeroplane window, watching the sun rise over Ireland. Eire was a small map, neat enough for an atlas, charmingly coloured in pale browns and greens. Someone seemed to have dropped a few tufts of white cotton-wool on it here and there; it took me some moments, when I first woke up, to realize that they were clouds. The map of Eire combined most poetically with the smell of bacon and eggs which pervaded the plane.

Today I have been in London—or perhaps it was yesterday by Little Bowden standards, or perhaps it may turn out to have been

tomorrow. This time business is hopelessly confusing. Anyway, I know that I was met at the airport and driven by friends through the streets of London in bright midday sunlight. I saw chestnut blossom, tulips, lilac, very green trees, shops, and a pub called *The Traveller's Friend*. In a side street somewhere I saw a notice:

DOLLS WIG MANUFACTURERS

Sleeping Eyes & Mamas Fitted

Today, whichever day it may have been, I have looked at Kensington High Street, the Albert Memorial, Marble Arch, and the Gothic splendours of St. Pancras Station. I know it is true, but I find it very hard to believe. Just now, turning away from the window, I wanted to get a handkerchief, and found that both mind and body were still geared to take it, not from the mahogany drawer in here, but from the light oak drawer of my dressing-table at home in New York. However, by tomorrow I hope the whole of me will be aware that I am safely across the Atlantic, so that I can settle down.

LITTLE BOWDEN, TUESDAY

Not for years have I had such a cold as this! The last three days are better forgotten. I am still in bed, but my wits are slowly coming back again, and I can lie here and savour, even though from a distance, the finer points of Little Bowden existence on a Tuesday morning.

Tuesday is market day in Market Harborough. I seem to remember reading that it has been the town's market day for over seven hundred years, so it has had time to grow into something of a habit. As a habit it is obviously contagious, for my father and stepmother regard it as essential that they should drive into town on Tuesday morning to shop, even though they are not native Harborians and seldom if ever take any notice of the actual market. I have just heard the sounds of their departure: the car coming slowly from the garage; the pause while the drive gate is clicked open and then clicked shut again with especial care so that no cattle shall get in (because it's Tuesday); then careful acceleration down Rectory Lane to the corner where it joins the main road. How I wish that I were going with them.

The view from my window is restricted, when I lie in bed, to the upper part of the yew-tree just inside the gate. I know that yew-tree well: rather too well, having studied it exhaustively in various bouts of illness in the past. However, it is an amiable, well-intentioned tree, and has always been a popular residence for large numbers of birds. I watch them for a little while, hopping about, twittering, flying off, and then coming home in a great hurry with the air of someone who has discovered a bargain. Perhaps it is their market day also on a Tuesday.

An occasional train goes past, and cars rush towards Leicester or London along A6. I hear a cuckoo, and discover with delight that I can smell the smell of cooking again. The sun is shining this morning for the first time since my arrival. If only I can get up and get out to that deck-chair on the lawn before the weather turns bad again. Until then, philosophy must be the order of the day.

Philosophy, sneezes, and paper handkerchiefs. I re-read Sigurd's first letter, telling me that he watched my plane take off at Idlewild, and hoped I should not go to Goose Bay this time. Did I really once fly the Atlantic, and not have a cold? Did I really once live at 1155 Park Avenue?

It all seems highly improbable at the moment; and yet, while I lie here coughing and sneezing and watching the birds, my mind has gone scuttling off on the flight and the rest of the journey. It looks down at the Labrador mountains, enjoys my snug curtained sleeping-berth, takes a glance at Ireland with its cotton-wool clouds, and reminds itself not to be apprehensive as we come down so close to the tiny rooftops and land in safety at London Airport. It whisks up to London in a second, past *Sleeping Eyes & Mamas Filled*, and in another second from St. Pancras to Kettering station, where my father was waiting for us with the car.

It was a beautiful drive from Kettering, through sunshine and the greenness of the Midlands. I enjoyed every yard of it, but the best part of it for me is always the last mile of the journey—the high ridge just before the long slope downwards to Market Harborough town. For miles both to right and left the wide, fertile valleys stretched away. Ahead I could see Market Harborough in its hollow, a little misty from here as usual, the church spire having to compete for one's attention as usual with the factory chimney near by. Much nearer than Harborough, however, was

Little Bowden, small, not in any way noteworthy, hidden away behind the railway embankment with scarcely so much as a sign-post to tell any stranger the way to it. There were the Rectory, the garden, and the family tea-table—all the things I had come to visit, and in a few seconds more we should be there.

I think I can hear the car coming back from town. Yes; they have drawn up at the front door this time. I hear them carrying in the parcels, and calling out to each other. Soon my father will slam the study door and begin to whistle his hymn in the room below me. Soon Violet will be coming upstairs, and then I shall get, not only some more paper handkerchiefs, but also all the news about the great world of Market Harborough on a Tuesday morning.

THURSDAY, 7.45 A.M.

The weather is plain disgusting, grey and cold with a strong east wind. It's comforting in a way not to see delicious sunshine outside when I'm still having to stay in bed and sneeze, but all of us feel that as spring weather this could very easily be improved upon. The yew-tree is shuddering outside my window. Inside the room the well-known trade winds are blowing steadily from the boarded-up fireplace, one to the west window, one to the north window, both by way of my bed. The electric fire is humming, but to keep warm while sitting up I am wearing at the moment three bedjackets and a shawl. On a similarly cold occasion a few years ago my friend Mercy asked me why I didn't complete the outfit with a hat and an umbrella.

There comes the other milkman. The electric delivery van whirrs to a standstill (a most discreet and sober vehicle), then a few milk-bottles are clinked at the doorsteps of Rectory Terrace, a few good-mornings exchanged, and off whirrs the milk. Our own milkman comes much later, and clicks the drive gate on his way to the kitchen door. My father, fortified by tea, is whistling while he gets up—the usual hymn-tune, with the usual long pauses for thought between one note and another. Everything is just as it has been each time I have been home for several years. I almost feel as if I had been lying here bedridden all that time, watching the yew-tree shiver, but an east wind is enough to make anybody feel like that.

The date on this page of my notebook catches my eye, and I forget the east wind immediately. It is Empire Day. On this day last year I was at a country house in Canada, having a few days of rest and fresh air and discovering that to Canadians this is The Queen's Birthday, to be celebrated with fireworks. My friends in Quebec Province took the festival so much for granted that it was some time before I realized that the Queen in question was Queen Victoria. She was handsomely celebrated too, with flags flying and a general holiday as well as the fireworks, and somehow she became more real to me in that distant country than she had ever been when I lived in London and was apt to think of her primarily as a statue in Kensington Gardens.

Bacon! I can smell bacon. That must mean for one thing that my cold is on the wane; but this is not one of the family's official bacon mornings. Oh, yes, of course - Diana. Diana heard yesterday that she was among the fortunate few who had passed into the Grammar School. Diana likes bacon. . . .

There is a loud bang on the door, and Diana herself comes in with my breakfast, sniffing a bit (she has also had the cold) but radiant, and bringing in with my tea and toast a wonderful aroma of the bacon awaiting her downstairs. I find after a brief exchange of morning compliments that I have rashly promised to tell her stories this evening.

#### THURSDAY AFTERNOON

Beside my bed there is one of those square, old-fashioned revolving mahogany bookcases. They never hold as many books as one would expect them to, and unless very tightly packed the books are always falling out. I've looked these shelves over pretty thoroughly in the past, and thought I knew every inch of them; but I see to my surprise that they have suffered upheaval since I was last at home. A number of the books are new to me. I can't imagine where they came from, unless Patrick has been clearing out his attic. The result, as they are arranged at present, is a striking and indigestible menu.

Next to an old Jack London comes a *History of the French Revolution* in red leather (new to me), then *The Life and Prophecies of Mother Shipton*, then *Norfolk Tales and Memories*. And here's my old *Jane Eyre*; it's on nasty greyish-brownish paper, and I left it

here because I never liked the book anyway. I remember reading this very copy when I was about eleven, in Rutland, in bed, by the light of a pocket-torch, thinking poorly of it and eating meanwhile chocolate that proved to be mouldy.

Next to *The Hound of the Baskervilles* are *Common Prayer and Hymns Ancient and Modern*, battered, and some views from the Isle of Wight. Other neighbours are *How to Play Golf*, *St. Augustine*, and Borrow's *Lavengro*; also an Everyman *Ivanhoe* which has been left out in the rain.

The more I look the more it all puzzles me. Next to five Westerns in gaudy wrappers we have Pope's *Poems, Epistles, and Satires*, which was awarded to an unknown boy at an unknown school as a prize in 1938, but was apparently not appreciated. *Villette* I recognize as my own abandoned copy also; I always had difficulty with Charlotte Brontë. But why are there two different editions of Conrad's *Romance*, separated by David Grayson's *Adventures in Contentment*?

Your character from your bookshelves? One row ranges from a guide to Quebec to a murder and *The Myths of Greece and Rome*. Another row offers *British Land Birds*, Tennyson, and *Motoring without Fears*. Next to *A Book of Prayers* (upside down) are *Meet the Tiger*, *The Diet Book*, and *A School History of England*.

I've told the family I mean to tidy these books as soon as I'm up, and they obviously think I'm crazy. My father said, "My dear girl, what do you want to do that for? Nobody ever looks at them." I replied that of course any visitor would look at them; and what if Canon So-and-so or someone wanted something to read before going to sleep. My father was entirely unconvinced, and amazement echoes through the household.

Auntie Jo has been in to ask whether I really mean to tidy those books. Violet has been in with the same enquiry. I took the opportunity to ask her if all the new books had come from Patrick's den. She said no, not all; some of them are the ones that they couldn't sell at the last parish Sale of Work.

### *The Mop*

At about 5 o'clock this afternoon I overheard a conversation between Auntie Jo, who was on the landing outside my bedroom, and Violet, in her room next door.



*Auntie Jo.* Violet, have you got the mop?

*Violet.* The what?

*A. J.* The mop.

*V.* The *what*?

*A. J.* The *mop*!

*V.* What *are* you talking about? The *WHAT*?

*A. J.* (*I hear her going into Violet's room*). Shall I spell it for you?

M-O-P, mop. The thing you do the floors with.

*V.* It's in its usual place, of course—on the landing.

*A. J.* No, it isn't.

*V.* (*preoccupied—she is getting ready to go out*). Well, *I* don't know where it is.

A few minutes later Auntie Jo came in to visit me, and I asked her the reason for this backchat.

*Monica.* It's a queer time of day to want a mop, isn't it?

*Auntie Jo.* No—I want it for the window, you see.

*M.* Window? What—do you mean for cobwebs?

*A. J.* (*with conscious pride*). No, we have a special brush for them, in the glory-hole.

*M.* Well, what *do* you use the mop for, then?

*A. J.* (*surprised that such a thing should need explaining*). I use it for pushing up Diana's window.

*M.* Oh, I see. . . . And where was the mop, by the way?

*A. J.* (*with a charming smile*). Exactly where I'd left it myself—in Diana's room!

#### LATER

Generally these story-telling sessions take place when Diana is in bed, comfortably propped on one elbow and surrounded by books, teddy bears, and a few edibles. As I myself am in bed just now she has been sitting beside me in here, her eyes large and shining as I repeated by special request the story of "When you found that the little girls had eaten your chocolate". My schoolgirl career was woefully lacking in episodes of daring, rebellion, or drama, but we seem to get on astonishingly well with such adventures as I have managed to summon up

for her from the distant past. The staple stories, besides tonight's one, are:

When you came in to the party with your goloshes on;  
When you made the new girls think it was mice;  
When you were playing the concertina in bed;  
When you called for three cheers for the wrong school.

We have been through them all tonight, and a few more besides. The only one of the old favourites not required any more is "When you had a Midnight Feast". In that one I think Diana is word-perfect; and she has also carried the art of the midnight feast to lengths undreamed of when my friends and I used to share out sardines, lemon-cheese, and barley-sugar after lights-out on a dormitory floor in Hampstead. Last night Violet brought in a plateful of things to show me--sugar biscuits, a cake, raisins, chocolates, and a handsome orange. It was a Midnight Feast (time 8 p.m.) for Diana, she told me; a further reward because of the Grammar School. And Diana has managed to get midnight feasts well and truly mixed up in my mind with Sir Isaac Newton. Fired by my story, she took the idea of them with her when she went for the first time (several years ago) to stay with some friends who lived in Newton's birthplace in Lincolnshire. The youngest young lady present was then so small that she had to be woken up and forcibly persuaded to enjoy the new form of entertainment. Later on, however, I gather that they all became experts. Wools-thorpe Manor is a small, compact stone house with a roof of Colly Weston stone, and is so like Little Bowden Rectory to look at that when I saw it I felt I had known it for a very long time. I often think of Newton, in that house where he made his tremendous scientific discoveries, and every time I do so I wonder how he would react if he were to open the door of the room where he had his little panelled alcove of a study, and hear inside the whispers and stifled laughter of three small girls and the rustle of paper bags.

#### LITTLE BOWDEN, MONDAY

Things are becoming almost uncannily normal. No one in the Rectory household is ill, the sun is shining, and my cold has gone. Moreover, my father and I have walked to the post. This was in

fact the first time I had walked more than a very few steps since before my operation. It's strange to think of it. Getting oneself from New York to England can be a very passive affair—if one is lucky enough, as I was, to have friends to help one at every stage. The actual flight had been arranged many months ago. All I had to do was to sit in a car until it arrived at Idlewild Airport; sit or lie down in the plane until after a certain number of hours I found myself at the airport in England; then sit respectively in a car, a train, and another car, and here I was in Little Bowden, with nothing to do but stagger in at the front door and sit down in a chair in the study.

If you turn to the left outside the Rectory and go through the churchyard you can post your letter in the little box (*Victoria Regina*) on the wall outside Dimblebee's shop in Scotland Road; but that is probably a full five hundred yards, so today, as usual, we chose the shorter expedition across the bowling-green to Gore's Lane. The grass on the bowling-green smelled delicious, and we crossed the main London road without mishap. It is just wide enough at this point to accommodate one car in either direction. Traffic rushed past us at the rate of about one car every two minutes. I thought of the American parkways I had seen recently, every one of their six traffic-lanes glittering with automobiles. No pedestrian would amble across those with a walking-stick, deep in talk. He would probably be arrested if he did so, for being a public danger. And if this were Denmark, of course, the bicycles would be after us. . . .

We posted our letters, and although the surroundings were only moderately rural, I felt extremely happy. Even if I'd closed my eyes I should have known where I was by the smell of things alone. There was a petrol smell, a good, strong, leafy-tree smell, a soupçon of railway, and a rich smell of English roadside: grass warmed by the sun, hedgerow, nettles, and the faint scent of small wild flowers. The petrol smell you might get anywhere, but the rest of the ingredients were as English as Leicestershire.

When that letter of mine gets to New York it will be put outside the front door of our flat by one of the doormen, and Sigurd or Miss Andersen will rescue it and take it inside. I haven't yet been able to discover why it is that no New York apartment, so far as I know, ever has a letter-box in the front door. We have to open the front door every time we want to find out if the post has come.

If we are lucky, there will be a letter with an English or a Danish stamp lying on the red velvet cushion which upholsters the more or less Italian Renaissance bench upon which we are supposed to rest while waiting for the elevator. If there are none for us, but some at the other end of the bench close to the Doctor's front door, we give his mail a dirty look and close the door again. We like our neighbours very much, but it is manifestly unfair that they should get letters (sometimes from England, even) when we get none.

In New York, however, it is much easier for us to post a letter than it is in Little Bowden. No problem of choosing between Gore's Lane and Dimblebee's, or their equivalent; all we have to do is open our front door slightly, put out an arm, and drop the letter into a narrow, glass-fronted chute that runs from the top storey into the vestibule, where it ends in a perfectly conventional post-box. I still find this one of the major wonders of the New World, and the higher up one is living the more wonderful I feel it is. We were once domiciled for a short time on the twenty-second floor of a hotel, soon after we arrived, and I used to drop my letters into the chute up there and stand in silent admiration until I thought they might have reached the bottom.

Well. . . I have walked to the post and back again. I have sat, not on the lawn, it is true, but in a deck-chair ("Be careful, my dear it's broken") on the patch of concrete outside the back door, which was less idyllic than the garden, but sunnier just then, and a good deal drier. I have taken some photographs, my father watching me dubiously meanwhile from another rickety chair. And I have become familiar once more with the kitchen and the kitchen sink, so that I feel I am really beginning to become just part of the landscape.

Little Bowden Rectory is a little more than three hundred and twenty years old. The date 1627 is carved on a gable. I've been taking a stroll in the garden, enjoying the view of the house from there, and trying to reconstruct what its surroundings must have been like when it was built, in the uneasy reign of Charles I. Deconstruct them would be a better phrase, since the chief feat of imagination required is to annihilate, make non-existent, a large number of Little Bowden landmarks, and spread out green fields instead of them.

Here then, in 1627, is the brand new Parsonage House, golden-yellow in colour, standing in its walled garden across the lane from the church. (The church was old even in 1627, of course, and there must have been some earlier home for the parson.) There are not many other houses, but just down the lane in Town Street (A6 nowadays) is the Manor House, built of the same tawny ironstone as the Parsonage.

I now remove the main London-Leicester railway-line from the bottom of our garden, and the embankment with it. At the same time, of course, the Northampton railway-line will be removed from the other side of the Manor House, and all railway bridges will evaporate. That leaves us considerably more rural. Next I sweep away all the houses on Clack Hill, plus the rows of red-brick cottages in Bellfield Street and Bellfield Lane. (I wonder which church bells were founded in that field, by the way—ours, or those of Market Harborough?) The red-brick row of Rectory Terrace opposite us will have to go too, though without meaning any harm to our neighbours; the cottages will return in two hundred and seventy years or so, when time clicks its way back to Queen Victoria's Jubilee. As for inns, I dare say the village had two in the reign of Charles I, as it has now, and I dare say they were the *Cherry Tree* and the *Greyhound*, as they are today.

Now I feel I am becoming aware of Little Bowden when it was really a village—supplied, of course, with the proper number of scattered farms and cottages, fields and gardens and orchards. The brook wound through it with many more kinks than are allowed nowadays, so no doubt there were plenty of floods. There must have been fords for horses and carts, but the only bridges were very narrow ones, for foot-passengers only. The noise of traffic must have been blessedly absent from that old village—which reminds me that I am, of course, entitled to remove all aeroplanes from the sky (including that plaguey fellow who flies so low every Saturday) and all roaring of buses, lorries, or other mechanized objects from the long-suffering air. Even the electric milk-vans will be swept off into the future, and there will be nothing to be heard in Rectory Lane except the peaceful clopping of an occasional horse's hooves.

A familiar rumble in the distance jerks me back from the early seventeenth century. Few daydreams in Little Bowden can survive the noise of an express train on the main line to London. Just at

the necessary moment one comes thundering past. I take a last look at the genial and (temporarily) sunbathed south side of the Rectory, and go in to help with the washing-up.

In this household, as in many others, the kitchen sink is nowadays almost more of a family gathering-point than the fireplace. There isn't much idling around a blazing fire, except occasionally on Sunday evenings. A coke-burning stove or a small electric heater has no tendency to thaw one into conversation, and people sit down by whatever heating is available mainly in order to snatch a quick look at the paper or finish off some letter before it is too late for the post. But the sink draws everybody, willy or nilly, since meals *have* to be prepared and washed up. If one should be lucky enough to have a startling item of news to tell, by far the best plan is to go at once to the sink. Any outlying members of the household are likely to hear from the hubbub that something is up, and come along to enquire.

Outside the kitchen window, where the drive widens out, is a restaurant for the Rectory birds. It is run by Auntie Jo, with occasional haphazard assistance from the rest of us. The birds from my yew-tree always have their dinner here, and so do those from the tall holly-tree straight ahead. I should imagine that bird-rents are higher in the holly-tree than in the yew, since from there one can look into the kitchen, see the scraps being collected and cut up to agreeable sizes, and watch one's waitress bringing them out to scatter about on the drive. Certainly the holly-tree is over-populated to such an extent that birds are constantly falling out of it in all directions.

While washing up one can talk, sing if one wants to (nobody minds), watch the birds, or enjoy the many and varied items which make up the view from the kitchen. There are plenty of flowers along the drive; at the moment the rockery is full of tiny white and purple flowers (I can never remember their name), and the roses are beginning. Moreover, beneath the holly-tree is a toolshed made of mud. It's quite a big building, and has nowadays a horrible roof of corrugated iron; but the cross-beam inside is very, very old (and very crooked) and the walls are of golden-brown earth, rather the colour of the Rectory, and riddled with holes because a lot of bees live deep inside them. I often watch

the bees flying in and out of their front doors, and wonder what happens to all the honey.

We can see lawns and green trees from the kitchen sink, can observe the entrance to the *Greyhound*, and can hear, though not see, all that happens in Rectory Lane. Strangest of all to me, we have a clear though distant view of Market Harborough railway station, especially the departure platform for London. I have said good-bye so many times on that platform that it seems somehow unnatural, inhuman almost, to have it included in so everyday a scene as the view from the kitchen sink; but there it is.

At the sink there are, as is normal, two taps; one for hot water and one for cold. Both are marked COLD. I'm quite used to this, but sometimes after an absence I forget which of the colds is the hot one, and how they got like that. I asked Violet this morning, and she reminded me that it was the one on the left. The reason they were marked like that, she added, was because it was a Sunday morning. This explanation means that the hot tap broke on a Sunday morning; the plumber had nothing in stock except taps marked COLD; and so of course he put this one in, and so of course, both taps have said COLD ever since.

#### TUESDAY

When the family went shopping in Market Harborough this morning, I went too. I feel just now that shopping in New York is nothing by comparison. It seemed to be an extra-special market day. The pavements were jammed almost solid; everyone was talking and laughing and shouting and hurrying, or standing stock-still and holding up the traffic. I was put out of the car into this welter of excitement in High Street, and walked alone, unsupported, to the Bank and the chemist, and then to the jeweller's about a watch-bracelet. Leicestershire surged happily about me, and I admired it and enjoyed it, but ardently hoped I should soon find myself at home again, having a glass of sherry. The family went its own round, collecting such staple items of Rectory diet as New Murders, jam, and lettuces; and we returned home in the car in good order, ankle-deep in groceries and gossip.

Extraordinary though it seems, the sun has been shining again today. We had yet another outing, a drive in the country before tea. The drive blew up suddenly, as our outings generally do.

Someone got the idea of it, and we all rushed helter-skelter out of the house and into the car, snatching at a coat or a hat or (in my case) a camera and the necessary gadgets. It was not a long drive—ten or twelve miles in all, I should imagine; but it was wonderfully pleasant to find myself immersed once again in the English countryside in spring. The hawthorn blossom was as thick as deep snowdrifts everywhere—pink snowdrifts as well as white ones. The chestnut blossom has begun. The trees are in their finest and freshest spring green—except the ash, which as yet has hardly any leaves. We got ourselves thoroughly tangled up in the weather-lore couplet about whether the oak leaves or the ash leaves appear first. If it's one, you only get a splash, to rhyme with ash; if the other, you get a soak, to rhyme with oak. Having now refreshed my memory with regard to English weather, I feel sure it will be a soak no matter what poetic arguments there may be against it.

We drove down bumpy little lanes, and through sleepy little villages, and every now and again the car was stopped for me to take a photograph. I realized afresh how differently I look at England now that I live abroad. On drives like this I don't merely look; I stare at England, trying to take in everything that any scene is willing to tell me. The trees and fields, the kind of village or house or church, the names on signpost or inn and how they can have arisen, the rivers and streams, the reminders of past history—all these things wake every available echo in my mind, and I only wish that I knew much more about all of them. Whether I invite them or not, comparisons with Denmark or the United States or Canada keep cropping up. Inside the car we talk peacefully about the rector of this parish or that, or where young So-and-so from a house we pass has gone to school, and how he is getting on, and although I am part of the landscape here, heart and soul, I realize that I am part of other landscapes too, both known and to be known in the future. All of them have something to say, even if it is not immediately apparent what they are talking about.

Those of us who travel have more and more places to come back to, and each place will give us something new every time. The more we grow to care for it, the more it will give, just like a person. Leicestershire has far more to say to me now than it had when I had nothing much to compare it with except London. It's home . . . and yet so are other places, and so will yet other



places become. Already I sometimes feel that I "don't know whether I'm going or coming", though not quite in the usual sense of the phrase; there are so many different people to be said good-bye to, and so many different places to which, in one sense or another, one comes home.

#### SUNDAY

A few days of warm and sunny weather have made a great difference to everyone. I've been sitting on the lawn, just as I dreamed of doing when I was in hospital in New York, admiring the big copper beech at the end of the garden and enjoying the smell of the lime-tree and the pinks. I've been to church. I've been to Leicester in the car with Violet, with the Mothers' Union banner done up in a brown-paper parcel. And I've been to Lutterworth, John Wyclif's parish, on a picnic jaunt with the family. To our surprise the Lutterworth church bells were pealing out, though it was the middle of Saturday afternoon. As we went in to have a look at Wyclif's church, we ran into the Rector. He urged my father at top speed (though without success) to come along then and there and help him take a service for the bellringers; turned to me and said, "You must be Monica", though I didn't remember ever seeing him before; and whisked me off to make a lightning tour of the church before the bellringers came down.

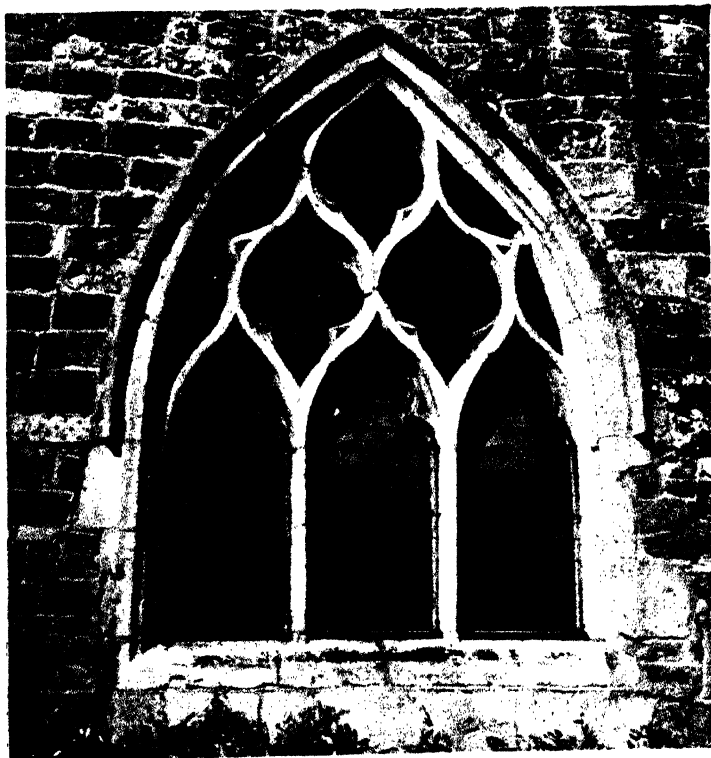
I was fascinated to discover in the church a larger version of my favourite window in Little Bowden—the thirteenth-century, slightly crooked one in the side-chapel. I've always had my own story about the Little Bowden window, and I now feel that I've discovered an important clue. Our window, I am now certain, was carved by someone who had seen the one at Lutterworth. Either it was the actual mason who had carved the Lutterworth one, or else it was some Little Bowden man who thought he could do it just as well. Anyhow, I imagine him and his mate working away in the churchyard here, chipping and measuring and putting the window together, full of high hopes. Then there must have come a terrible moment when they discovered that the carving was crooked. It did meet at the top all right, but it was just irreparably lopsided. (That's one of the chief reasons why I like it.) I envisage an outburst of fine pre-Chaucerian English, and perhaps a heated discussion as to whose fault it was; after

which they went off to the *Cherry Tree* or the *Greyhound* and consoled themselves with a tankard of ale.

#### THURSDAY

No wonder people talk so much about the weather in England. Now we're having a heat-wave, and instead of rushing out of the house into the sun whenever possible to get warm, we have to keep rushing into the coldest part of the house (my father's study) to try and get cool. The general interest in ice-cream is even keener than usual, and we are almost worn out by the unusual mixture of (as we feel) equatorial heat and a Leicestershire routine.

The heat began to trouble us four days ago. We were on our way home from a visit to Haileybury, all very tired and much too hot, when my father said he thought there was an old inn somewhere in the neighbourhood where Edward Fitzgerald had written his translation of Omar Khayyám. I maintained that he



*Window in  
Little  
Bowden  
Church*

had written it in Suffolk, but anyhow, our flagging interest was aroused. We looked out, and found the inn on our route—a charming building, old and small but very well-kept, called the *Falcon*. By a happy and genuine coincidence we arrived at the exact moment of opening-time. Within a few seconds we found ourselves established in a low, cool, empty inn parlour, in comfortable oak chairs, gulping down ice-cold Pimm's Number One out of pewter mugs. The Pimm's worked like magic. We all became about ten years younger on the spot. We even got up enough energy to find out about Edward Fitzgerald. He *had* stayed there, though not so much for work as for holidays. We read with proper respect an autograph letter of his which was hanging on the wall, in which he described how he enjoyed staying at the *Falcon* and going fishing in the river which we could see from its windows. The whole thing seemed admirable to us, and with all thanks to Fitzgerald we set off cooled and rejuvenated on the remainder of our drive.

Yesterday we went for a drive to Naseby, where the battle was. That is to say, we set out to go to a place I had found on a map, called "Old or Wold". We knew nothing about it, but were intrigued at the thought of a place which didn't even know its own name. However, a black thunderstorm suddenly gathered ahead of us (one gets such things, of course, in tropical climates like that of Little Bowden), so we hurriedly turned right to escape it, and found we were in Naseby. (That's a name of Danish origin, obviously. If one were to turn it into modern Danish and back again it could perfectly well be found to mean Nosetown.) We studied the severe, grandiloquent language of the inscription on the tall obelisk near the Naseby battlefield, and admired the splendour of the chestnut blossom in the great trees around the church.

We returned home via Husbands Bosworth, and, as always since my childhood, the unanswerable and foolish query came into my mind: "Who was the wife of Husbands Bosworth?" I know it to be foolish, since I made it up myself, and I take it to be unanswerable. In reality, I suppose, Husbands Bosworth was so called to distinguish it from Market Bosworth in western Leicestershire, where another important English battle took place. The Battle of Bosworth ended the effective career of Richard III and started the Tudors upon theirs, just as the Battle of Naseby ended the effective career of Charles I and set Cromwell going. It is

strange to try and connect these gory doings with the placid green pastures of our local Midlands. I've been trying to think whether I ever knew anything much about the Wars of the Roses. Apparently not, or perhaps it's the heat; anyway, all I remember just now is that the initials of the battles fought in them can be kept in mind by the useful mnemonic: "Sam's Brother, Leaving Northampton With Many Salt Tears, Hurried Home Bravely To Bosworth". The initials, yes; but what they stand for (except Bosworth) I do not know any more.

Last night Violet brought me up some milk on her way to bed. I was sitting up in bed reading, but I couldn't disguise the fact that I was in floods of tears. I explained as quickly as possible that I was overwhelmed by the beauty, pathos, and sorrow of *Jane Eyre*. It's the very copy about which I was so scornful when I got home to Little Bowden last month—the old one on nasty grey-brown paper; which seems to prove that eleven is not the best age at which to reach a definitive judgment about the works of Charlotte Brontë.

#### SUNDAY

There are several items which I always like to visit on getting back to Little Bowden or on leaving it. First and foremost comes the rectory angel. Then there are the copper beech, the lime-tree, the hornbeam, the lavender, and, of course, any flowers that are in bloom. The mud wall with bees in it needs no visiting, as one becomes perfectly familiar with it from the kitchen sink. Another item not to be ignored is the sundial on the wall above the drawing-room window. It has graceful numerals, somewhat French in style, and bears the date 1813 and the initials T.R. Who T.R. was I don't know, but I allow myself to suppose he was the rector at that time, that he liked gardening, and that he had a tendency to be late going indoors for meals.

These items are my own particular choice—the choice of a wanderer, no doubt. Patrick would, I imagine, choose to visit the garage first, and then his potato crop. My father might choose the coalshed and then the apples. Diana has a weakness for the summer-house roof and any climbable trees, plus undoubtedly

several secret haunts the existence of which we are not supposed even to guess at.

I am off tomorrow on some visits to friends, so I must go downstairs to the drawing-room and take a look at the carved wooden angel under the centre beam. No one else in the family has ever had the same feeling for it as I have, and, strictly speaking, I don't blame them. It is not a very intelligent-looking angel. It's not even a very amiable one, and the least one might expect of an angel is that it should look amiable. It is probably rather uncomfortable up there under the big oak beam, holding up the ceiling. Its wooden wings are cramped. It wears a blue robe (not too good a fit) with loose sleeves, and a big white collar or bib of strangely puritanical cut. It is holding up a shield with the air of one who has been made to feel slightly foolish for the last two or three centuries, and resents it.

However, I have a great affection for the angel. I have no idea who put it up there, or why, or how it has managed not to be thrown out in all the successive alterations inside the house. To my mind, it belongs to the Rectory, and I have never left or arrived here without opening the drawing-room door to pay my respects to it and to hope (a little dubiously, sometimes) that it wishes us well.

#### LONDON, WEDNESDAY

To one view of the Battersea Power Station add a book about Bath (and hundreds of other books), a thunderstorm, Bach's First Brandenburg Concerto, and a purse that has belonged to Charlotte Brontë. This particular mixture could for me mean nothing else but staying in Dolphin Square—and even then, though I could have predicted most of the ingredients, the purse of Charlotte Brontë is an unexpected piece of seasoning.

I'm in London again. With this, as with my other old haunts, the only thing that surprises me once I am there is that I have to call it "again". I always feel as if I have never left them. The front door here will open with a little sound which I could write down from memory in New York or anywhere, if there were a notation for writing down the sounds of front doors. I could also write down the sound of milk-bottles being put into the cupboard from the corridor, and the sounds of the different electric-light



*The Rectory Angel*



*Bees in the Wall*

switches in the flat, and I could put the knives and forks away in the right drawers after washing up, with perhaps a slight hesitation, in this particular case, as to which knives ought to go into what my hostess calls the Horrors drawer.

The view of London from these seventh-floor windows is extensive: somewhat lacking in ancient architectural splendours, no one would deny; but changing in emphasis all day long as the light and the weather affect it, and grandly dominated by the Power Station. We have looked at it and discussed it a good deal during the two days I have been here, in between talks, meals, rests, and expeditions to the local shops, and there is always something new to see.

Charlotte Brontë cropped up because I have just been reading *Jane Eyre*. When I told Marjorie how I had wept over it, she said to my surprise that she was a member of the same family as Charlotte Brontë's husband, that many stories about Charlotte Brontë were still current in her family, and that she actually had in her own possession, here in Dolphin Square, some Charlotte Brontë relics. A few minutes later she put the little purse into my hands.

It seemed to me to be a most touching object. *Jane Eyre* herself might have owned it. The price was indelibly marked inside it—one shilling and a penny. That was much more a century ago than it is today, I know; but still it was unmistakably the kind of purse which would be bought by someone who had taste but no money. The edge, which should have been silver and perhaps once looked like it, was now rusty. The sides, which might once have looked like stamped leather, revealed themselves now as a stout, papery composition, wine-red like the paper lining.

We wondered whether Charlotte Brontë had taken it with her on her honeymoon tour in Ireland. She had been so happy there with her clergyman husband. They went to Killarney, among other places, and Marjorie showed me a leather-bound exercise-book in which there were some carefully pressed ferns, with a note in Charlotte Brontë's own writing to the effect that she had collected them during her wedding tour. But the ferns occupied only a few pages, and within a year Charlotte Bell Nicholls had died, like Branwell and Emily and Anne, and the other Brontës, of tuberculosis.

All this made such an impression on me that I tried to describe



*Charlotte Brontë's Purse*

it to another friend while he was driving me to have lunch with his wife and himself in Bloomsbury. I said, "I've just been holding in my hands a purse that belonged to Charlotte Brontë". To this he replied, "That's the kind of thing that *would* happen to you". I'm wondering what he meant, not least as he is my publisher. We spent the rest of the drive discussing old age. My idea is that by the time one gets old and infirm one may hope to have learned enough common sense to be as little of a bother as possible. Mervyn seemed to disagree with me heartily. He indicated that he didn't want to lose his individuality, that people were only interesting if they had queer ways, and where would one's personality be if it had all the corners polished off. I stuck to my noble ideas, but was pursued up Kingsway by an uneasy feeling that he was right—and, moreover, that I should end up by being a perfect nuisance anyway, no matter which course I tried to follow.



Well. . . . There was once a time when Mervyn was even newer than I was in a publisher's office in Paternoster Row. His office was just across the corridor from mine. One morning my secretary came hurrying in to ask my advice. There was a suitcase in his office; he seemed to be going away for the week-end. His pyjamas were hanging out of the suitcase; he wasn't in his room at the moment; and please, did I think it would be all right for them to sew up the arms and legs of the pyjamas, just for a joke? After rapid thought I said diffidently that I wasn't absolutely sure that he would find it as amusing as they did. That was one of my first glimpses of the variety of problems with which one can be confronted in the publishing world.

#### MALVERN, SATURDAY

The Malvern Hills rise out of the flat Severn Valley with the dramatic suddenness of a mountainous island rising out of the sea. I always watch for them from the train, and every time they catch me by surprise, stepping into the landscape ready-made at a moment when one would not have thought it possible. Soon after that first sight of them comes Worcester, with an unsurpassed view of the cathedral as we cross the broad Severn. When the train gets near Malvern the Hills really begin to jump about, dodging from the left-hand windows to the right-hand ones, and fairly jostling for position; but by the time we get to Malvern station they have settled down into their usual tidy row, from North Hill at one end to British Camp in its dominating position at the other.

It's a good many years now since I first saw the Hills, but they established themselves in my thoughts from the very beginning with the same determination as they establish themselves in the view from the train. There they just are, like an old friend. It's a bit of luck for me, with the limited time at my disposal, that a visit to my friend Mercy and a visit to the Malvern Hills work out to be one and the same thing.

We've been up on the hills today, but our mountaineering was simple in the extreme. We walked out of the hotel and across the narrow main road, and turned up the steep little lane between the *Unicorn Inn* and the Gas Company. The lane began as a genuine road; there were even cars crawling up and down it, though more

or less on all fours. We climbed upwards, past a few little cafés and cottages, each almost able to look down into the chimneys of the one below. Then suddenly the lane was not a road any more; it was just the path over the hills. Up to the left, grassy tracks led to the Worcestershire Beacon. The path straight ahead would take one past Sugar-Loaf Hill and down to West Malvern, where they face towards Wales and are able to watch the sun set. Our ambitions were modest, so we turned to the right and were immediately upon the steep green flank of North Hill. There were a few foxgloves out, and the bracken was uncurling its fresh green fists. Malvern town lay below us, with the wide Severn Valley beyond. We were only a matter of yards from civilization, but I was satisfied, and we talked about camera lenses and music reference books.

There is a large embossed notice on the wall of our hotel, close to the street, which states in a confident manner that Edward Archer is :

LICENSED TO LET  
POST HORSES  
AND  
CARRIAGES  
FOR HIRE  
LIVERY AND BAIT  
STABLES

I've often wondered what was the last occasion when anyone went in and asked with any real conviction for a post horse or a bait stable.

#### MONDAY

The quiet of the hotel is often varied at week-ends by an inrush of children, let out of the numerous local boarding-schools to visit their parents, who come to stay here for the exeat week-ends. I watch them in the dining-room and the lounge and am constantly amazed by their poise and good manners and generally well-kempt appearance. I'm sure I wasn't anything like such a good job of work at their age, and I find myself hoping that there

are occasions when they don't look quite so neat, or behave quite so beautifully. We all watch one another with tremendous interest in the hotel, of course, though we all pretend that we never do anything of the kind. Yesterday morning in the hall a number of us were waiting around, looking respectable, when a small boy asked his mother in loud, clear tones, "Mummy, have you ever seen a crystallized man?" That was too much for us, and, in spite of our inflexible British reserve, everyone within earshot laughed.

Last night, just after dinner, we heard sounds of loud weeping from a bedroom in our corridor. The door was ajar, so we looked in and found a little girl of about three sitting up in bed, hugging a doll and crying wholeheartedly.

Mercy went in and asked what was the matter. The child wouldn't say. She wanted Mummy. So Mercy asked her name. "Elizabeth."

"And what's your mummy's name?"

No answer.

"Can you tell me your mummy's name, and then I'll go and fetch her for you?"

After a long pause, the child said doubtfully:

"Edna."

No further information was forthcoming, so Mercy set off to find a mother called Edna. Elizabeth had stopped crying. I noticed that her cheek was bulging, but she seemed quite happy now that she had a little company. I admired her woollen doll, and asked if it had a name. She answered, as if it were cutting its first tooth:

"No, not yet. It's only just beginning to get a name."

Meanwhile Mercy had found Elizabeth's mother in the hotel ballroom, and they arrived, somewhat breathless from hurrying up several flights of stairs.

We withdrew tactfully, but couldn't help overhearing what Elizabeth's trouble was. She'd got a sweet in her mouth and she didn't like it.

A month ago I was looking out at Park Avenue, and then at the mountains of Labrador. Now I am perched in Great Malvern upon the side of the Malvern Hills, and have managed during the

past two days to get within reasonable range of my two favourite summits, the Worcestershire Beacon and British Camp or the Herefordshire Beacon. Both are grand hills, but British Camp has the additional fascination of a summit which is still clearly modelled into the contours of ancient British earthworks. It was a strong fortress once, and the grassy track up which one climbs to the top used to be a roadway for the British war-chariots.

British Camp draws one's gaze whenever it is within sight and one's thoughts when one is far away. I've brought Mercy an oil-painting from America; I can safely say it's my finest oil-painting to date, as it is the first I've done. The central feature of it is British Camp, presented very dramatically (as I feel) and put on with a palette knife. It was originally meant to be a Connecticut mountain, but circumstances were too strong for me. We were in Connecticut during a heat-wave - an American heat-wave, which is worse than anything known to Little Bowden. It was so hot that I had to stay indoors most of the day, and so I decided to use my new oil paints to paint the view from the window. But it grew even hotter, and we had to pull the blinds down. Anyway, the mountain I wanted was too far away to look impressive, so I



*The Unicorn  
and North Hill,  
Malvern*

used British Camp instead. I worked at that hill, and the sky around it, for days and days, going from crisis to crisis in a thoroughly amateur way, running out of white paint (it's amazing what a lot of white paint one needs), out of turpentine, out of the one acceptable yellow. However, finally there was the British Camp. I added a few trees from the Connecticut drive, done in odd moments when we could bear to have the blind up, but there was still a large empty space at the bottom of the canvas. I put an imaginary garden at the base of the hill, with flower-beds and lawns. Then, as it all seemed a bit uninhabited, I put some white garden furniture on the lawn, with Mercy on one chair and myself on another, each about half an inch high. I set the table with a bright blue tea-service, scattered a few books on the grass, and called the picture *Tea with the Ancient Britons*. It's queer to come back and look at the real, living British Camp, and disentangle it from Connecticut and the smell of oil paints.

The county boundary runs along the crest of the Malvern Hills, which means one could blow off them on the east into Worcestershire and on the west into Hereford. I've been pretty near it several times in the past, mostly in the direction of Worcestershire. However, if it's possible to go a few yards down from the crest, one can generally shelter in whichever county is out of the wind. I remember one perfect morning on the Malvern side of the Beacon, when we had the whole hillside to ourselves and sat on the turf basking in sunshine and idleness. Malvern town lay just below us. It was a Monday morning, and it was delicious to sit up there doing nothing and think how hard people must be working in the miniature town below. There were two larks singing, one on our right and one on our left, and they did it in efficient antiphonal style, first one and then the other with no breaks, just as if they had been trained by the Priory choirmaster. We talked of Langland, six centuries ago, embarking upon his *Vision of Piers Plowman* "on a May morning, on Malvern hills". We wondered if he'd ever sat just where we were sitting, and what kind of a little town he would have seen down there. And I thought of the little Princess Victoria, who used to be taken for donkey-rides on the hills in her childhood about a hundred and twenty years ago, and we wondered whether a donkey was really an agreeable form of locomotion on these steep and slippery slopes.

*Malvern  
Hills*



SHORTFIELD, WEDNESDAY

To visit the L. A. G. Strongs one should go to Farnham station. When telephoning them one must remember that it's Frensham; and actually, of course, they don't live at either place, but at Shortfield. That's the kind of thing I find very difficult to remember. I haven't yet made up an adequate mnemonic for it, and anyway I'm frequently lost in speculation (at the wrong moment) about the ancient Pilgrims' Way, which runs through Farnham, or about Gong Hill on the road to Shortfield, which was once Kong Hill, and where obviously, since *Kōng* is the Danish for "king", some Danish king must once have won or lost a battle. However, once I do arrive I know without doubt that I have got to the right household. The conversation alone would be enough to establish the fact. For instance, Sylvia said to me when I arrived, apropos my bedroom windows: "Mink, in the night you'll hear a noise like gorillas trying to climb up and get in at your window—but you mustn't mind-----"

Patrick put in encouragingly :

"It won't be *gorillas*. . . ."

Leonard has been making joyful variations on the theme *In vino sanitas*, ably abetted by the others. Sylvia has been describing with a complete disregard for truth the frequency with which poached eggs disappear down the sides of the drawing-room sofa (on which I'm sitting) during picnic meals— "*Only* to be discovered ten days later when we're doing out the room".

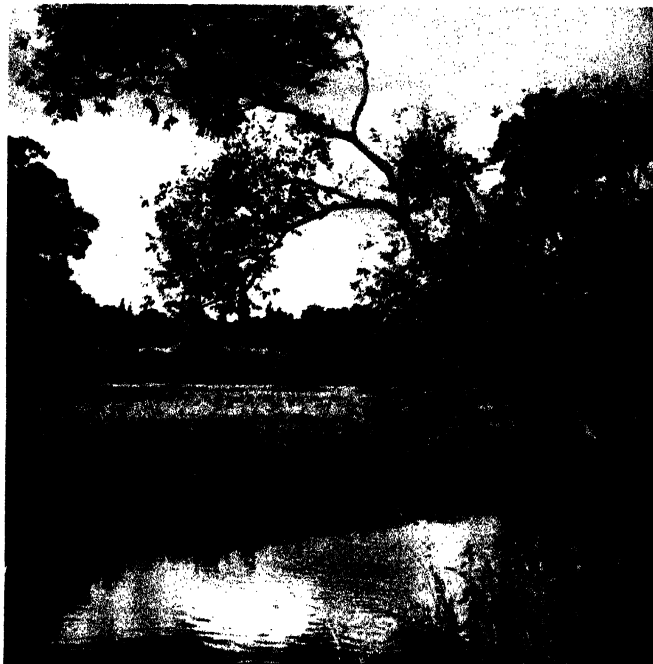
#### FRIDAY

From my window here (there were no gorillas in the night) I get a very good green view. A grass-covered terrace, a hedge, steps leading down to a lawn; then trees, and in the distance hills which I take to be Hindhead. In the middle of the terrace is a bird-bath, within a square flower-bed at the corners of which are four little round bushes, like porcupines doing homage. All the houses round about here seem able to hide themselves away snugly in impenetrable thickets of trees. There are no obtrusive railways and factory chimneys. It's just all green, and one can find pleasant walks in almost any direction. Strolls, conversation, and music—what could be better. The sun generally leaves Surrey the moment I set foot here, but this time it has shone for a few seconds now and again, and I have hurried out with my camera. Once it even stayed out long enough for me to fit a close-up lens on to the camera, measure a distance of  $13\frac{1}{8}$  inches, and take a portrait of a rose that is growing on the terrace. It's good to be able to remind oneself that roses really do grow, in gardens, and don't only exist tied up in expensive dozens in glass-fronted refrigerators at the back of Manhattan flower-shops.

My camera led us into unexpected conversational paths this morning at breakfast. I don't know quite how we got launched, but the basic theme was photography.

*Sylvia*. I was thinking of the all-too-obvious symbolism photography gives you—you know, You Must Have Shadows, and all that sort of thing. And you must have light, of course, too. (*Settling into her topic.*) Now that's one of the things I always object to about the Heavenly City. How does it go? There shall be neither sun nor moon, or something. And then no *water*. No more sea. Just think of it!

*The Stream at  
Tilford*



*A Surrey Field*



M. Well, but they do promise you a nice river, anyway. A pure river of the water of life, or however it goes.

S. Yes. . . . But the whole thing sounds so horribly urban. Walls as of jasper, pavements, gates made of things like chrysoprase, and so on——

Leonard. It sounds rather like the Edgware Road.

S. (*deliberating*). Well, no—more like Aspreys, I think. All very expensive and of the highest quality. But utterly material. Just exactly what one wouldn't want.

#### LITTLE BOWDEN, MONDAY

It's a pouring wet day, and a strong north-east wind is tossing the yew-tree branches towards the house. From the flowers along the drive, and from the calendar, one can tell it's July, but from the weather it might be January. In three days' time I expect to be off on another journey, flying from London to Copenhagen, but at the moment I am deep in the Rectory routine again, and our major excitement has been a trip into Market Harborough in the car. It was extremely wet, but with macintoshes and good team-work we managed not to get drenched, and after my usual call at the chemist and the bank I went to the jeweller to fetch my watch-bracelet. His shop is full of old silver and strange treasures, and I always have a good look round. Today I found something unexpected—a stack of large bound volumes of old music. Looking quickly through them, I came upon a very tempting one with the title *Sacred Melodies* and the date 1812. Mrs. Pike said she had no idea what the price was, and Mr. Pike was out. "Take it home with you, if you like, and try it over," she said. "We'll telephone this evening and let you know the price. Then, if you don't want it you can bring it back."

We experimented to see whether so large a folio could be protected under my macintosh. It could, so I accepted her offer with thanks. As I was putting on my rejuvenated watch-bracelet I remembered what day it was, and said to Mrs. Pike, "This watch-bracelet was bought for me from your shop, with the watch, on this very day, many years ago—it was a birthday present". We agreed that it was an odd coincidence I should have happened to get the bracelet back today.

This evening the telephone rang, and there was a message



*The Terrace*



*A Shortfield  
Rose*

from Mr. Pike. Please would I accept the book of music from him and Mrs. Pike as a birthday present? I was greatly touched, and accepted it with delight.

The title-page alone is a wonder, announcing with about six different brands of type and a lot of curlywiggles a title which might be described as thorough rather than snappy.

*Sacred Melodies*  
from  
HAYDN, MOZART  
and  
BEETHOVEN  
Adapted to the best  
English Poets  
and  
Appropriated to the use of  
The  
BRITISH CHURCH  
by  
William Gardiner

Mr. Gardiner was a Leicester man, I see with interest. He dated from Leicester, July 6, 1812, an elegantly phrased dedication to the Prince Regent, and many of the local gentry are among the subscribers. I find it hard to imagine that the "British Church", in Leicester or anywhere else, made a very good job of singing the ornate Augustan verses set to complex melodies "arranged" from Haydn, Mozart, or the very modernistic Beethoven, who was still alive. But it is a charming volume, and there are some of the good old favourites hidden away among its *grandeurs*.

The suitcases are out again, and about this time on Thursday I hope to be arriving at Kastrup Airport and looking out for Sigurd. A week from today we should be somewhere in unknown Jutland, sightseeing. I still find myself thinking longingly of a deck-chair on a green, quiet, sunlit lawn. . . . After six weeks of English weather I'm reasonably disillusioned about the chances of such a thing here, though of course it might be better weather—much better weather, summer, even—when we come back in August. But I am expecting the sun to shine in Denmark.

## PART II



## II

### COPENHAGEN, THURSDAY

There's a lot to be said for Robert Louis Stevenson's advice to travel hopefully, but it seems to me extremely far-fetched to call such an attitude "better than to arrive". I'd rather do both; have the pleasure of travelling hopefully, full of ideas as to how one's arrival will turn out, and then have the pleasure of finding either that things are exactly as one had imagined them, or else that everything is totally different.

When I got into the afternoon plane for Copenhagen at Northolt, I felt that I knew every detail of the flight in advance. I could foresee that while we were having our dinner we should be flying high above Denmark in the evening sunlight: so high that almost the entire country, Jutland, the islands, and the blue sea around them, would be spread out below us like a map—much as Ireland was when I woke up in another plane six weeks ago on the way from Labrador to London. I would peer down and think that in places so insignificant one could not even identify them from the air I had paid visits or gone sightseeing. Then, about when the sun is setting, we should find ourselves over Amager, flying lower and lower above this flattest of islands until one could see the fields and roads, small red houses, cars, possibly even cyclists. The pilot would execute the alarming manoeuvre which (as I see it) consists in first making a sudden dash for Sweden; thinking better of it and deciding to land on the smooth blue waters of the Sound, just for fun; thinking better of that also and deciding to rip the roofs off a few little houses on the way to the airport; and then, feeling we have perhaps had all we can stand for today, straightening up and landing on the concrete strip so virtuously, so smoothly, that we cannot even feel when the wheels touch the ground.

In addition to all this, I expected to read most of the way, have carache, and eat my dinner from square cardboard plates. I'm not clear now why I felt so sure that they'd be square; but anyway, they proved to be round, and practically no detail of the flight was as I had imagined it. There was no view of any kind, as the weather was wet. I didn't even read very much, but spent most of the time in easy talk with an English acquaintance whom I'd met in the passport queue. There was no sunset over Amager,

and the rain had arrived ahead of us at Kastrup. However, the scene had an unexpected beauty of its own. As I stood waiting my turn at the airport I happened to turn my eyes away from the queue, and saw that the entire visible out-of-doors was practically nothing but a vast wet blue-grey nothingness, very bright and shining. The tarmac was of this brilliant blue-grey colour; the sky was an immense expanse of it, even more gleaming; and between the two was a thin pencil-streak of green which was the Amager fields.

Whenever Sigurd meets me at any kind of terminus he has a knack of appearing several doors or offices or platforms sooner than I should officially have expected him. He did the same this time, waving encouragingly through one door while I stood in the queue, and appearing in person at another well before I imagined myself free of the formalities. Within a few minutes we were driving away from Kastrup, seated to my surprise in a car that from its looks ought to have been feeling homesick for Park Avenue. It turned out to be, for a strictly limited period, ours; hired (for dollars) for our Jutland tour, this being the only way we could get any practicable form of transport. I'd never imagined myself floating along the Amager roads in a dollar-grin, and I'd prefer something less conspicuous; but it certainly does float. Amager went past us at an unprecedented speed, and I almost grew cross-eyed trying to read the names on the little shops—*Kaffe*, *Kolonial*, *Varehus*, and one called *Alt Kan Vendes*—Everything can be Turned.

Unnaturally soon the familiar green-and-gold spire of Our Saviour's Church rushed into view, with Ved Volden, the big block of flats where we used to live. There was no time to take in much of the scene, but I fixed my attention on the windows of our flat (fourth floor of number 11, the one with the long balcony), and saw from the lights that we were at home—or at any rate somebody was at home. . . . Queer to think that our home for the moment is the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and that I have no imaginable domestic errand to take me into the ironmonger or greengrocer or soap-house or any other of the well-known shops that we passed in the main street of Christianshavn.

Kongens Nytorv and the Angleterre came almost immediately after Our Saviour's, by dollar-grin time. No one could imagine, when whisking about like this, what a long way away from each other they can be when you are walking in a high wind and the

bridge goes up just before you reach it. And now here I am comfortably established at the hotel, not quite certain whether I'm an American tourist or one of Denmark's oldest inhabitants, but extremely grateful for the tea which Sigurd has had brought in to revive me. The teapot is sitting on a miniature bonfire enclosed in a glass and metal cage, and from that, if from nothing else, I should know that I am in Denmark again. There are flowers in the room, sent by kind friends to welcome us. There are stacks of Danish newspapers, which not unnaturally look far more at home here than they do when Sigurd gets them in New York and they compete for one's attention with the day's *New York Times* and the airmail *Times* from London. The last Danish newspaper with which I really got thoroughly familiar was the one I had spread out under my easel in Connecticut last summer to protect the floor while I was painting. It had a huge headline, "Murder on Christianshavn still Unsolved", which I used to read with faint annoyance scores of times a day. It occurs to me suddenly, now that I've been on Christianshavn again, that I never even found out who was murdered.

While drinking tea and exchanging news of our adventures, I look with a terrible lack of enthusiasm at the suitcases which Sigurd has brought with him across the Atlantic for me. Good friends all of them: trusty old companions; but they mean work. They all have names, as we find that the quickest and easiest way of referring to them. Istanbul and Madison have only Sigurd's things in, if I remember rightly. Salzburg is his too, but I believe that Leicester is mine, and Revelation, of course, and Basil too, surely, if I could only see it. Somewhere I have lists of the things which I packed into those suitcases in New York many weeks ago. I'd better consult them pretty quickly. Within the next twenty-four hours I've got to extract everything I'm likely to need here, or in Sorø, or on our trip to Jutland, discard anything I can from my Leicestershire era, and re-juggle the entire apparatus so that the necessary things are all assembled in the two small bags which take up my lawful share of the luggage-space in the car.

#### FRIDAY MORNING

I've just had time to assure myself that we really are in Copenhagen before we drive away from it. I'm glad we shall be coming



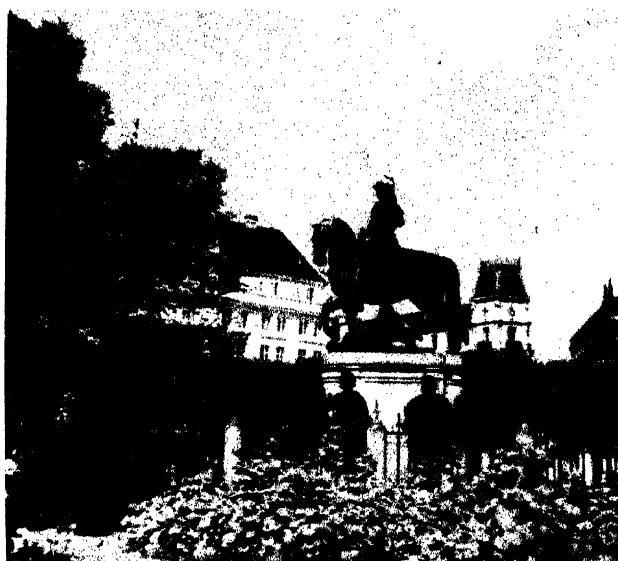
back again. The view from the window I have studied with some care, and everything is in its rightful place. The trams are there, of course; that I knew by ear alone, and it was easy to distinguish in their concert the special groans and squeals of number 7, which has to make some pretty sharp turns hereabouts. It used to take me to the dentist, so the sight or sound of a number 7 is enough, even now, to make me want to break into a run in case I might be late for my appointment. Over by the other tram-lines is my old acquaintance the newspaper kiosk, in shape something between a sentry-box and a pencil that has put on weight. All the trees around the central statue in the square are fully out, their tops trimmed flat and their branches closely interwoven. There are a lot of taxis waiting on the rank, and it still appears to me extraordinary that there should be Copenhagen taxis waiting for passengers rather than passengers waiting in agony for non-existent taxis.

I nodded to Store Kongensgade, Great King Street, where I have in my time bought many pounds of the very best coffee substitute, and also zither strings. I remembered to ask Sigurd whether it was the street that was great, or the king; he says the street, which I'm somehow sorry to hear. I took a look at Bredgade, where I've been to concerts and parties and prolonged bouts of window-shopping, and at Nyhavn, where the little ferry is waiting to take one home to Ved Volden, and where I always imagine Hans Christian Andersen looking wistfully out of the window in one or other of the coloured waterside houses.

Then I went down into the view myself, as I needed something from one of the shops, and hurried round Kongens Nytorv, just to get the smell of it. It smelled all summery, and I realized that at last the sun is doing what I expect of it, viz. shining brightly. People were feeding the pigeons as usual by the tram stop, and a while-you-wait photographer (cannon-photographer to Danes) was looking for customers. Outside the Royal Theatre the dramatists Holberg and Oehlenschläger were sitting as usual, comfortably watching the *mêlée* from the chairs with which their sculptor had thoughtfully provided them. In the centre of the King's New Market, King Christian V upon his horse looked as if he wished he had got a little nearer to the excitements of Østergade or the Magasin du Nord during all the years he had been



*On Kongens Nytorv*



*King Christian V*

ostensibly advancing in their direction. Behind him I could see the windows of this hotel, reminding me that I ought to hurry back. They have already begun to stow away the luggage, and very soon we shall be starting off for Roskilde and Sorø.

#### SORØ, FRIDAY EVENING

The great Bishop Absalon no doubt foresaw a number of things before he died in 1201, but it is reasonable to suppose that he might have been surprised if he could have seen us arriving in his own special town of Sorø today in this wide and shiny American car, driving down a thoroughly modern and uninteresting street called Absalon Street (after him) to a house at the corner of two small roads, just near the edge of Sorø Forest, which are called respectively after his Uncle Ebbe and his Uncle Toke. Here we are, anyway, and I don't know why I keep on thinking of Bishop Absalon.

This is a house we know very well. Folmer and Inge live here, and, with Copenhagen, it is to be our headquarters during our visit to Denmark. We received a great welcome, and from the minute we set foot on the garden path all my memories of the house and household jumped into the foreground of my mind, alert and complete in every detail. I scarcely even needed to look about me, I knew it all so well. There were all the copper kettles, all brightly polished, of course, and the thriving rows of window-plants such as I could never possibly have managed to rear. There were all the books; Folmer, like Sigurd, has far too many books, and, like Sigurd (or me), he has seldom let that deter him from acquiring new ones. I was aware, even before we got inside the front door, of the Hogarth engraving of a company of strolling players, of the little oil-painting of blue-green spruce-trees, and of the pattern on the china which would be set out ready for our meal. By the time the excitement of our arrival had lessened, and we had begun to settle down, I had remembered all the names that belong to the circle here: friends and family, dignitaries from the County Administration or the big boys' school, the Akademi—or rather, they had remembered themselves, so to speak, as if a signal had sounded, and had come hurrying out of some unknown filing system in the recesses of my mind, all ready to be enquired about and envisaged against the proper background.

But all the same, I keep remembering Absalon. My experience of Denmark so far is that practically no place of any major importance has managed to reach its present condition without intervention of some kind or another from either King Christian IV, Bishop Absalon, Holberg, or Hans Christian Andersen, or all of them together. If they didn't build it (or pull it down) they lived in it, or slept there, or wrote about it, or got themselves buried there. I sometimes feel I could throw together quite a nice little guide-book to Denmark on those four names alone, with occasional support from Thorvaldsen, Grundtvig, and Kierkegaard.

In Roskilde, where we stopped for a short time on our way down here this morning, both Absalon and Christian IV were present, in spirit at any rate. Absalon was bishop of the powerful Roskilde Sec at one time; and Christian IV put those tapering green copper spires on the top of the ancient red-brick cathedral, in what I always feel was one of his most inspired moments. I was glad to get a chance to pay my respects to the cathedral again (and to Christian IV), before we drove on along Denmark's Route No. 1, the long, broad road which, with due assistance from ferries and bridges, would take one slap across Denmark to



*Roskilde  
Cathedral*

Esbjerg and deposit one in a convenient situation for the boat to Harwich, if one went on long enough.

Sorø lies a little off this broad highway, and I have just discovered why—it was originally an island. I like to feel that I am living on an island, even if it has been improved out of existence. Sorø, this friendly and rather sleepy little town, has associations with every one of my Big Four. Bishop Absalon is buried in the fine church, which belonged to a flourishing Cistercian monastery founded in the twelfth century by his own influential family. Christian IV went to school here, and when he grew up he altered and improved the establishment and gave it its present title of Academy. The eighteenth-century dramatist Holberg willed all his large income for the upkeep of the Academy, and he, too, is buried in Sorø Church. Hans Christian Andersen, when still an unknown and uneducated youth, used to come over to Sorø while he was at school in the neighbouring town of Slagelse, to receive encouragement from the poet Ingemann, who was a master at the school.

I hope that later on I shall have time to walk along the shores of Sorø Lake and conjure up these notable ghosts. At the moment I am only too well aware that time and the Nyborg ferry wait for no man. Tomorrow morning, with proper deference to the ferry time-table, we head westwards, to Korsør, Nyborg, Odense (Hans Andersen), and unknown points farther on. We are all setting off together, though actually the full tour will be made only by the Ford, since each of us has special friends whom we want to visit, and our ways will diverge accordingly. The hotel rooms were all booked months ago—before I was ill, in fact. I'm longing to see Jutland. I rather wish, though, that Inge hadn't put those inviting-looking chairs under the tall willow-tree in the garden. There they were, on that beautifully green lawn, with the sun shining down on them: and tomorrow, bright and early, we shall be driving away.

#### MID-OCEAN, SATURDAY MORNING

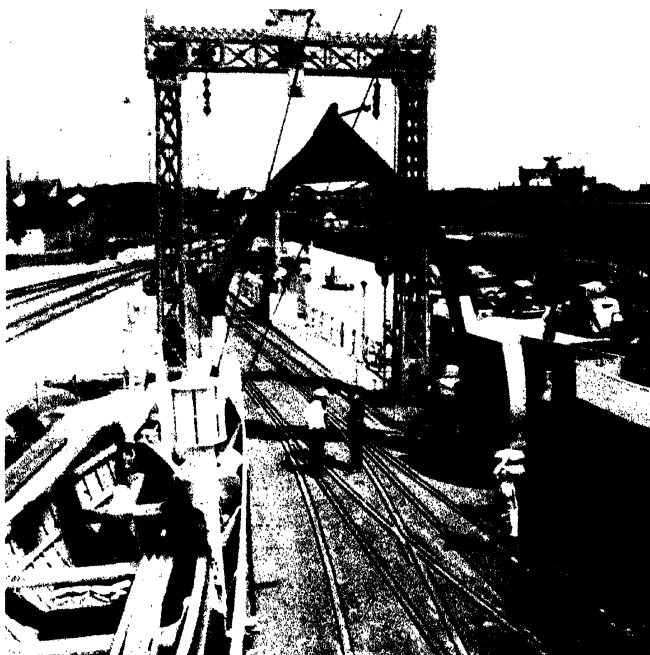
It is an unusual experience for me, while having lunch at a comfortable table in a large saloon, to find myself looking down on to the top of a railway train and the roofs of a cluster of assorted cars, plus an open rowing-boat hanging from its davits. This is, in

fact, the Great Belt Ferry, one of the pivotal points of Danish life. Every item of ferryboard life ("shipboard" hardly seems the proper expression) is ordinary enough in itself, but the mixture as a whole is an agreeable blend of improbabilities. Seagulls and waves outside, smoked salmon on our plates, a steady clink of beer-bottles and coffee-cups all round us, a newsboy offering the latest daily papers for sale. There are travellers of all ages, shapes, and types. Somebody's telephone call to Copenhagen is through, and please will he take it? Picture postcards are being written, to be posted on board; down on the dark lower deck people are dozing uneasily in their railway compartment or their car, and soon probably we shall be doing the same.

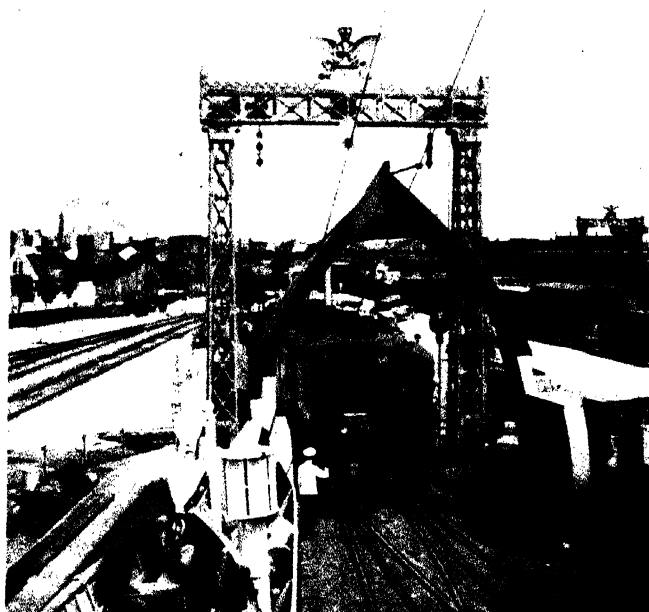
It isn't easy to summon up any very nautical feelings in these surroundings, on a voyage (a calm one, happily) of under two hours. In spite of the lifeboats on their davits, in spite of being able to go for a blow on the deck, the general feeling to me is decidedly one of train rather than one of ship: a good, brave, reliable train that has learned to swim rather late in life, and can be trusted to cross the Great Belt at a steady breast-stroke in any kind of weather.

Before we set off from Korsør I watched a ferry official signal the train and its attendant queue of motors on board. He wore a white jacket and cap, very smart, and I think he might have some such title as Mr. Super-Controller-of-Train-and-Automobile-Locomotion-on-the-Great-Belt-Ferry. He stood below my window for some time beforehand, conferring gravely with his colleagues. Nothing turned up except a man with some milk-bottles, and I began to be afraid that our train had got lost. However, it did arrive—of course—and Mr. Super-Controller signalled it on board with beautiful gestures. After it came a number of little cars, heavily laden with luggage, rushing backwards as fast as they dared. The final car, I suspect, was something of a gate-crasher, for it only managed to squeeze in sideways, with its front wheels almost over the water. There was much gesticulating from a kind of Greek chorus of sailors in blue jerseys, but at last the car was urged backwards far enough for the prow to be closed down, and our voyage began.

Odense doesn't only belong to Hans Christian Andersen, I've just learned. It originally belonged to Odin, no less; its name comes from Odin's Vi, the Holy Place of Odin. Denmark on a

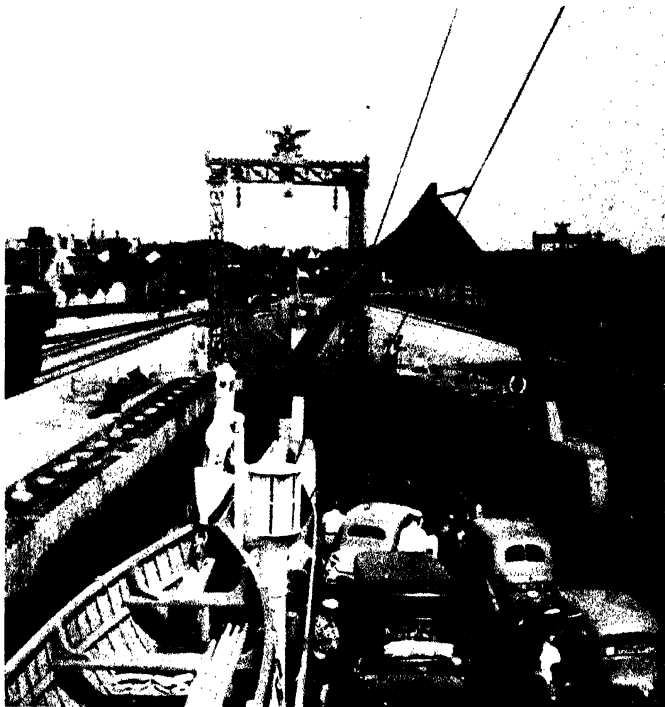


*Waiting for the  
Train*



*The Train comes  
on Board*

*The Ferry  
leaving Korsør*



summer day like this looks as happy and matter-of-fact as any country could. I find it strange to reflect that the Great Belt and Route No. 1 and Fyn and all the rest of it were once under the sovereignty of Odin and the other deities of Asgaard.

#### FREDERICIA, SATURDAY EVENING

Today I feel I've had so much concentrated essence of Danish summer that it will go on nourishing me for a long time. Even if the sun doesn't shine again during our entire trip, I've had today. I've seen real Danish summer weather, and Danes out in full force enjoying it.

How magnificent the sky is in Denmark. It's never merely a background for the sun; it's an entity in its own right, and seems to throw warmth down on the open Danish countryside from independent sources of its own. I wonder whether the Vikings had a special god for it? I quite see today why it is that the Danes, in describing a successful trip in the country, will often mention as one of the major good things a "high sky". It's been lofty



today, all right; and I'd forgotten how dazzlingly white the clouds are here. Clouds in England are much greyer and softer. Summer clouds in the U.S.A. have so far meant to me as a rule the approach of a thunderstorm, and been looked at accordingly. These majestic, piled-up galleons of cumulus are far more theatrical than any stage electrician could make them. They're wonderful to watch as they sail about on their blue ocean of sky. We had a pleasantly cool breeze all day today—even I couldn't regard it as a cold wind; and as we drove along we sniffed in all sorts of delicious scents from the fields by the roadside.

I've been collecting fashion news on our journey today. It's just beginning to dawn on me that people who wear things like tweed and overcoats and hats are really almost laughable exceptions. The very latest in summer outfitting has been parading in front of me all day today, and I've been gazing and scribbling down notes. For a bicycling and camping holiday my notes say: "Short tight shorts, especially on fat girls." Everybody seems to be sunburned already, and it doesn't *look* as if they got it out of a bottle from the soap-house or the *parfumerie*. The perfect gentleman this year, if young and slim and sunburned, wears shorts, bare bronze torso, a kerchief loosely knotted round the neck, and a huge straw hat rather like the ones the horses used to wear in summer at Hyde Park Corner. Bathing trunks are worn by all ages, and I must regretfully add by all sizes. An informal note can be struck, especially for the not-so-slim, by combining these with a shirt of the loudest possible checks.

For couples taking a motor-bicycle holiday the correct dress is very different. Riding-breeches are *de rigueur*; also a helmet with goggles. Colours are sombre. The effect aimed at seems to be one of uncompromising fierceness, suitable to the speed and audacity of motor-bicycles. White gymshoes are very popular for cyclists and pedestrians, especially with the younger set, who collect car numbers. Ash-blond hair, bleached several tones paler than the skin, is predominant among the young. An effective way of achieving it seems to be to stand by the roadside with pencil and notebook for hours and hours, in hot sunshine, noting down the number of every car that passes. Our entire route has been sprinkled with groups of these pale-haired, brown-skinned youngsters.

When motoring in Denmark one certainly does *see* Denmark,

complete with inhabitants, even on Route No. 1. I couldn't help thinking of our view of Park Avenue today, with all the coloured beetles rushing up and down apparently of their own volition. It's just as impersonal out on the big U.S. parkways, except that then one is down among all the robots oneself. The parkways almost terrified me when we got there first. Beautiful wide roads, edged with lawns and perfectly placed trees—but no houses, no towns—no people! Pedestrians are forbidden to exist near a parkway, and so are bicycles, perambulators, and other sub-vehicles. The car one is in must go *fast*, must not stop, must not turn. . . . All I could see of the American nation was an occasional elbow stuck out of the driver's window to get a little fresh air.

Driving in England was a great deal more human, and I now appreciate for the first time the joy of being able to stop the car on a main road if one wants to, or even turn round and go back where one came from. And in England one has villages to look at, and churches and pubs, and a proper sprinkling of inhabitants, walking along or leaning on the garden gate. But in Denmark the whole nation seems to tip itself out on to the main roads in the summer holiday season. I found myself wondering if there was anyone left at home anywhere, and thinking with Keats of some little town "emptied of its folk this pious morn"; though I must say that both Odense and Fredericia had filled up nicely by the time we got to them.

Odense was blazing with red and white Danish flags this afternoon. It looked very festive. Even though I didn't suppose it could be in honour of Hans Andersen, it made me think of that great day when he had returned in triumph to Odense, as famous a man as he had always longed to be, and the whole town had been illuminated in his honour. We went to the little museum in Hans Jensen's Street, and the treasures they have collected there brought him so vividly to mind that I almost imagine I can hear his voice as I sit here in Fredericia, looking out at the old city ramparts. There were letters of his, drawings he had made on his travels, and those fantastically intricate paper cut-outs he made to entertain his friends. There were the Larsen Stevns frescoes of scenes from his life, which I find one accepts as completely convincing. It must have been just like that, one feels, when he kissed his mother good-bye and went off to Copenhagen

to seek his fortune; just like that when he came back, world-famous, to receive the freedom of his native town. Like everyone else who sees them, I stared at the battered trunks which used to accompany him on his travels, the umbrella, the top-hat case, and the length of rope he used to take with him in case there was a fire in his hotel.

These things brought him nearer—and yet, could anything bring Hans Andersen nearer, once one has got to know him? I don't think so, because, like all the really great writers, the real individuals, once he's got a foothold in one's mind he is there for good. One of the very great advantages of knowing Danish and something about Danish life is that one can begin to appreciate Hans Christian Andersen as a Dane as well as a genius. His stories make their impact in any language, I know; but he was as thoroughly a Dane as Shakespeare was an Englishman. Now that I'm back among Danish speakers I can hear them talking pure Hans Andersen many times a day. Brief, ironic comments: little half-sentences which people use without even giving them a thought—they are the standard small change of Danish conversation now, just as they were when he was alive to notice them. He noticed pretty thoroughly, too. He knew what people would have liked to say, but couldn't, and was quick to spot the difference between what they believed they were saying and what they actually meant. Today, as in his time, they say "*Det er ganske vist!*"—"It's absolutely true!"—about some piece of gossip, with an over-eager honesty in their voices which can be heard in any language, though it's very Danish in this particular phrase. It reminds me of the tones in which somebody English would say, "Now I don't want to make you unhappy . . ." when about to tell one a particularly unpleasant home truth.

This special Danishness of Hans Andersen, which is also universality, has been in my thoughts a good deal today. He put it into all his stories, even a bubblingly inventive fantasy such as *Elverhøj*, *Elf-Hill* (like an ant-hill), from which Sigurd often quotes a favourite phrase, "The Hell-Horse got a pain and had to leave the table". I feel considerable sympathy with that Hell-Horse myself for the time being—but I've just remembered *why* the Hell-Horse got a pain. It was because the Elf-Maidens had been dancing at the feast, "both plain and the kind where you stamp, and it suited them well". It's impossible to capture fully the

gentle irony of the original; but I can hear how his phrase might be used all over Denmark, in all eras, to describe the well-meaning amateur efforts of less ethereal young ladies.

We had to leave Odense and Hans Christian Andersen after far too brief a visit. I want to go back there. Once when I was on my way to England from Copenhagen, before the war, I heard an American tourist in the train say regretfully to her companion, "We didn't have enough time for Denmark. They only allowed us two days—I'd have liked three." Now that I know how far one has to travel from America to get here, I understand much more clearly the problems of compressing "Europe" plus the Atlantic crossing into the short space of a summer holiday. I didn't have enough time for Hans Christian Andersen today, though luckily he is in all essentials portable, independent of time and place. Seeing Odense has reawakened the echoes, and reminded me what a lot of Denmark I can find in his writings, no matter where I may be.

The flags in Odense today were in honour of the Agricultural Show. The streets of the town were full of farmers and farm-workers in their best clothes, and at first we couldn't understand why. (Fashion note: The Smart Young Farmhand will enhance his sun-tan this season with a white peaked cap.) As we were regretfully driving away from Odense, we came suddenly upon all the fun of the fair—or some of it, anyway: the showground itself, immediately beside the road. I jumped out of the car to have a good look. A Danish policeman looked a little thoughtful when he saw a dollar-grin impeding the customary free flow of cyclists, but Sigurd explained something or other to him, and I was allowed to stand and stare to my heart's content.

The view was very gay, but on the whole I didn't derive much agricultural benefit from it. There were no cattle or horses to be seen, for one thing, and I found that disconcerting. There were a lot of lorries, but nobody (so far as I know) can lead a motor-lorry round and round in a judging-ring until someone awards it a blue rosette. There were some booths and milk-churns and hikers, and a few farmers' wives in their best dark coats who looked as if they were longing for a cup of coffee. There were scores of flags on tall flagstaffs. It's no good, I realized, trying to appreciate

an agricultural show from its outer suburbs. I'd have liked to take a ticket and go right down into the heart of it; but we had not budgeted for such dissipations, so I got back into the car and we drove off to Fredericia.

Fredericia is looking very gay too. All the flags were flying when we arrived here. There is a famous statue in the public gardens just opposite: the Victorious Soldier. That was all right—I'd been expecting him. What puzzled me was that he appeared to have a big wreath of flowers round his neck, and others on his head and on the point of his musket. I even thought I could see flowers spilling out of the derelict cannon, or whatever it was, upon which he had placed his foot.

On closer investigation it proved that the Victorious Soldier was genuinely bedecked with flowers. We had arrived in Fredericia, quite by accident, just after the town had celebrated its great annual feast of thanksgiving, and in this the soldier plays an important part. In the war of 1848-50 Fredericia was at one time besieged by the Holstein insurgents; but one night the garrison made a daring sortie, and in spite of heavy casualties freed their city from the enemy. The anniversary is celebrated every year, and Bissen's statue has come to mean more and more to the Danes, so that now it is not only a memorial, but a national symbol.

While the sun was setting, Sigurd and I went for a short stroll on the grass-grown city ramparts, and I tried with my usual lack of success to imagine a battle, a piece of history, taking place in these idyllic surroundings. More recent scenes of violence are much easier to imagine, with the world the way it is nowadays and with so many recollections of the war years in Denmark indelibly printed on our minds. Sigurd was complimenting a member of the hotel staff on the comfort and up-to-dateness of the hotel. It looks perfectly new; and it *is* new, the man told us, because the entire ground floor had been blown up one night during the war by the Nazis, as an act of reprisal.

What makes the Fredericia ramparts look particularly domesticated to me is their close resemblance to the ramparts of Christianshavn in Copenhagen, close to which we lived for several years. I can't place a convincing-looking historical battle on or

near ramparts like this. I can only place seagulls and ducks, and fair-haired children playing in sandpits. A particular trouble with all my battlefields is that they are always intruded upon by the ghost of a young girl in a pink shawl, who walks slowly across one corner of the field on the arm of an English nobleman. I've read the episode myself in her MS. journal. It was in 1814, the young lady was fourteen and extremely attractive, and even while in real danger from the guns of besieged Huningen, she received yet another proposal of marriage. I find a girl like that hard to get out of my mind, once she has got into it, and now she is at Fredericia too.

However, Fredericia is much pleasanter without battles, anyway, so I just looked about me idly from the ramparts, enjoyed the evening air, and realized afresh how late it keeps light in Denmark during the summer months. These are in fact the "light nights" for which Danes abroad are so often homesick, and very beautiful they are on an evening of real summer. I've sent off some letters to England. Only three evenings ago I was writing letters from England to Denmark, and I find it somewhat hard, moving about at this pace, to remember which address to write at the top of the letter, and which on the envelope.

#### SUNDAY MORNING

There was a crowd round the statue of the soldier—children, holiday-makers, Danish soldiers of a more modern age in their shirt-sleeves, and so on, and I badly wanted to photograph them in the bright sunshine, with the statue and the flowers and the Danish flags. But the minute they saw me with my camera they all, with embarrassing politeness, pressed back out of the way so that I could concentrate on the statue. The more I said that oh, please, it didn't matter, the more polite they became, and the wider the empty spaces all around me. So I reluctantly photographed the statue, feeling more and more foolish, and they looked on with interest from the middle distance. When the crowd had forgotten me and was engrossed by the local cannon-photographer (well named here), I secretively took the nearest available thing to the picture I had hoped for, and crept back across the road to the hotel, to fortify myself with a strong cup of coffee.

## AARHUS, SUNDAY EVENING

When we drove into Aarhus this evening I was thinking what I presumed to be the correct thoughts for the occasion. This is the second largest city in Denmark, *mem.* its flourishing industries, has very modern university buildings scattered in a big park (but don't they get wet feet going from one lecture to another?): come, now, *mem.* flourishing industry, impressive modern harbour installations, Marselisborg Palace is royal summer residence, cathedral is very fine. . . . Then, just as I felt I was getting the hang of things, I thought I saw a statue of a pig. It was surrounded by a small crowd of people, and as I peered backwards I heard Inge say to Folmer, "Oh, they're looking at the pig—it was unveiled yesterday".

It didn't seem probable, but it was true. There is a kind of fantasy which in Denmark goes arm in arm with the most solid common sense, and the citizens of Aarhus seem to me to have shown both qualities in their choice of a hero (heroine, rather) for their newest statue. Dragons and dolphins and such-like may be more poetical, but no Jutlander ever made his living by the export of tinned dragon or smoked Pegasus wings or dolphin in tomato. But Danish bacon and Danish tinned ham, good joints of pork for the Danes themselves to eat with apples and prunes . . . those are the things that spell prosperity, and nothing could be more appropriate than that there should be a statue to pigs in Denmark.

Very soon after passing the sow and her piglets we reached this hotel, and I found to my pleasure that we are just beside the cathedral, with a fine view of it. The cathedral tower, of medieval red brick which seems unusually dark, rises straight up from the pavement of the square, and soars high above us. The arched main doorway is quite a long way below this window; in spite of all the very Danish sights and sounds this is not wholly unlike looking down at the Brick Church from 1155 Park Avenue, New York. There are even a number of American or Americanized cars in the view, though of course they are well intermingled with cyclists.

There have been other American echoes too, for we arrived at the hotel just after a big party of American college girls who were on a summer holiday tour. They had just emerged from two big blue buses, and the lobby was packed almost solid with

## AARHUS TRAINS

them and their luggage. It was a hot day, and they had no doubt had a long, hot drive with a lot of intensive sightseeing. They all without exception looked neat and trim and cool, and they were going through the luggage and claiming their own bags with quiet efficiency. I should think that their parents, waiting in the U.S.A. for picture postcards from these unpronounceable regions, would have been proud if they could have seen their daughters here. It was strange to hear American voices all round one again. I heard that they were to spend one night in Aarhus and were to see the cathedral, The Old Town, and the University : the same things as we hope to see.

There are trams in the view from the window here, which mixes up a feeling of Copenhagen with the echoes of New York and the actualities of Jutland. But these trams have given me a shock. When I was outside the hotel a little while ago I heard the familiar squeal which could only mean an approaching tram. The tram came into sight, and its shape, colour, and personality were also perfectly familiar. It might have been a Copenhagen

*The  
Victorious  
Soldier*





tram. (Perhaps indeed it once was; all the Aarhus trams were blown up one night during the war as a Nazi reprisal, like the Fredericia hotel.) There is always a long sign along the top of these trams in Copenhagen, giving their route and destination, and I looked to see where this one was going. The only information on the notice-board was about false teeth. This again, like the pig statue, seemed to me a moment for doubting the evidence of one's own eyes. I waited for the next tram. Its board proclaimed a brand of shoe-polish, and the third tram was dedicated to vinegar.

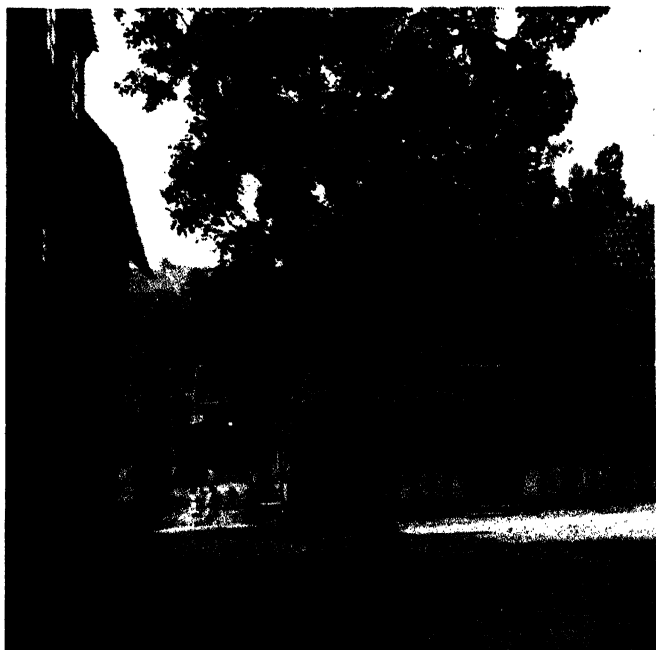
From the other window of this room I have the unexpected pleasure of watching Danish policemen bicycle back to their headquarters. It is a real pleasure. Danish policemen are the tidiest-looking ones I have ever seen, and I have a feeling that they can all speak at least three foreign languages and do higher mathematics. And these Aarhus ones are perfect models of all that a cyclist ought to be. They come down the road where the false-teeth tram came from, pedalling soberly at exactly the number of kilometres per hour which is correct in a main road in a Danish city. At the corner outside the cathedral they slow down, put out one hand with the arm at exactly the correct angle to indicate that they are going to turn, then jump off their bicycle at exactly the correct moment and wheel it up the path, and go indoors to make their report. They go through the routine with such precision that I began to feel I was watching a very superior clockwork toy, set off by some invisible child to keep on rounding the corner by the cathedral.

#### AARHUS, MONDAY

One of the things of which Aarhus is specially proud is the open-air "museum" called The Old Town. We have been there today, and it seems to me that museum is far too airless a word for such a beautiful and real town. It is made up of a large number of old buildings from all over Denmark, reassembled here into a most attractive little town, with cobbled streets and alleys, a market-place, and a broad stream spanned by a bridge. We wandered up and down this morning, enjoying it all. I thought regretfully to myself more than once: "They only allowed us two days for Denmark—I'd have liked three". Even



*Shop Sign in  
the Old Town*



*Market Place,  
the Old Town*

for The Old Town alone, three days would hardly be enough, for many of the houses are arranged as museums, and it's tantalizing to think that I might have seen a watchmaker's shop, a book-binder's, a sailmaker's, and a chandler's, and plenty more besides. However, we did manage to see the palatial Mayor's House, which seemed to contain everything from a tempting little shop on the ground floor to marble halls and crystal chandeliers upstairs. It also had what in Danish is called a *Svalegang*, a swallows'-way. I remember thinking when I first came to Denmark that this was something laid out for the convenience of swallows, but in point of fact it's an open-air gallery connecting the different upstairs rooms.

The Old Town is one of those places for which one's enthusiasm is liable to be greater than one's foot-power, and I see with admiration that the writers of the guide-book have been so considerate as to warn visitors of this fact. I wished this morning that I had been one of the American girls from the blue buses, who have presumably danced their unwearied way all through The Old Town and out again long before we got here. Alternatively, I wished there were some kind of land sailing-vessel which could skim along cobbled alleys: a bath-chair with a sail, perhaps, or a kind of contraption based upon roller-skates.

While I was standing on the bridge, trying to persuade the old mill etc. to arrange themselves in a form acceptable to my camera, I heard Inge exclaim, "Oh, a big rat -how horrid!" I ignored the rat, being intent on my photograph; but I did notice that two little flaxen-haired children, after a brief look at us and at the bushes where the rat had disappeared, turned and ran away. Within a matter of seconds, as if by magic, a rat-catcher was standing beside us. Nothing in the least Pied-Piperish about him; he was a Danish official in his neat summer uniform of white jacket and peaked cap, own cousin (as it might be) to the Super-Controller on the ferry.

He asked us if we had seen a rat, and if so, where, please? When he had been shown, he explained to us how necessary it was that rats should be killed. If not, they killed the ducklings, who were at this moment swimming picturesquely beside us in the stream. As he hurried away on his hunt, Sigurd said, "Well, that is efficiency!"

One has only to try and imagine a few of The Old Town's

buildings put inside another building, the hall of some giant museum, to realize what it is that makes them so attractive here. It is, first and foremost, fresh air. Not museum air, but good, honest fresh air and all the changes of weather. It can rain on them and snow on them, and the Danish winds can whistle as loud as they please around every corner. There are trees and grass, there is a fountain playing in the market-place, and the broad stream in the centre holds everything together, and gives the nearby houses a wonderful chance (which I feel they are not slow to take) of reflecting their beauty in the water. As we left The Old Town I realized also that it has given me something I had not expected: a background, a series of backgrounds, against which to imagine some of the best of Hans Christian Andersen's stories.

I have been puzzling over some strange relief-work on the façade of the cathedral tower nearest the street. There are three rings in the brickwork, one containing three roses, one a sort of geometrical flower, and the third an anchor. I found on enquiry that the anchor belongs to St. Clemens, to whom the cathedral is dedicated—he is also the patron saint of St. Clement Danes in London, which seems to show that the Danes have always liked him. As to the anchor, "He came sailing on an anchor somewhere" is all the elucidation I've managed to collect so far, but that sounds very natural behaviour for the patron saint of sailors.

The inside of the cathedral is lofty and very light—much more so than one would suppose from outside. It is a long building, and high-arched, and it is whitewashed, as so many Danish churches are, with patches of medieval fresco which I wished I could have studied more closely. I often miss stained-glass windows in Denmark, but the Danish Lutheran churches, with their big windows of plain glass and their whitewash, have a light and a spaciousness which is all their own. They seem to bring indoors something of the strong, active light and fresh air which I have been noticing in the Danish summer countryside.

On the way out of the cathedral we came across some far from austere young angels: not at all the kind, I feel sure, with whom my angel in Little Bowden Rectory would care to associate. I caught sight of them cavorting about in a kind of vestibule, on a

magnificent monument, close above the heads of three very grand-looking persons, life-sized at least, who stand in the centre of the monument in elegant attitudes, with an air of wishing to be regarded as lost in thought. Upon the finely curled wigs of these dignitaries the angels are making a happy pretence of pouring out faith, hope, and charity, or health, wealth, and happiness, or some other suitable assortment; but anyone can see that they aren't in earnest, and I had a fleeting thought that the personages might do well to come out of their trance for a moment and make quite sure that discipline is being maintained.

There was a wedding at the cathedral this afternoon, and I watched from my window the arrival of the bride, and the departure of bride, bridegroom, and all the wedding guests, all in full evening dress, of course. Then we had a further excitement, for Inge pointed out to me a bicycle-messenger upon whose carrier was emblazoned "Messenger-Service SMUT". It's a name which can be enjoyed in two languages. *Smut* in Danish is a slang way of saying get along quickly: hop off, hop along. Seeing SMUT reminded me of the startled expression I used to see on the faces of my English friends at the end of a Danish cinema performance. The last kiss is over, or the last shot fired, and then, just as the audience is about to get up and go, there appears on the screen, very large, the single word SLUT. It only means *Finis*, really. English faces wore the same baffled look once in Copenhagen when there was a rat-week on (a rat is a *rotte* in Danish) and they were confronted at every turn with fierce posters saying ROTTEN.

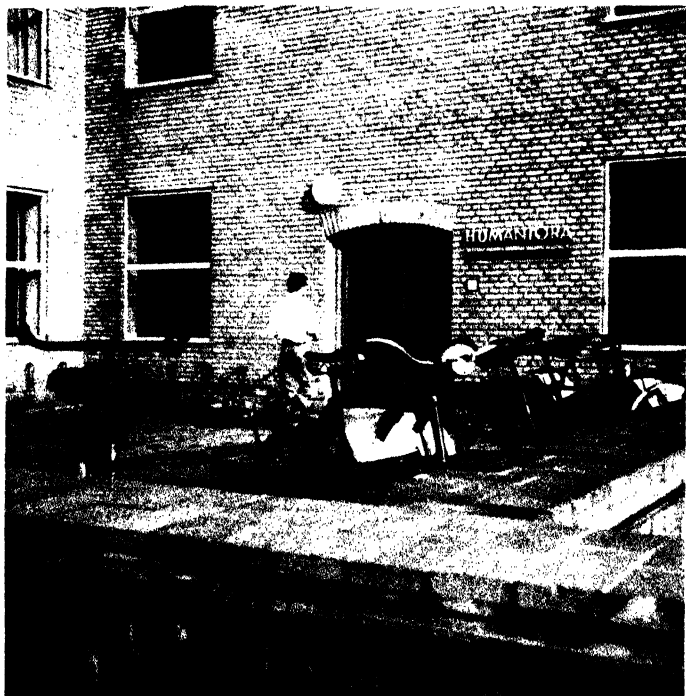
My favourite messenger-service name is the Copenhagen firm called LARGO. I think I know how it came about. There was a messenger-service in Copenhagen called, very suitably, PRESTO. I used to see its carriers whizzing about when we lived there. Then, I imagine, a rival firm set up in business, and its owner said to a music-loving friend of his, "I say, old fellow, can you tell me some kind of word that's rather like *presto* but much more impressive?" "Oh, yes; *largo* is much more impressive," said the friend; and so LARGO it was.

As for Aarhus University, to say we have seen it would be gross exaggeration, but we have at any rate managed to see what it

*Angels at  
Aarhus*



*Wedding at  
Aarhus Cathedral*



*Aarhus  
University*

looks like. It was closed for the summer vacation, so the brevity of our visit didn't seem quite as discourteous as it might otherwise have done. There was nobody about. The spacious lawns were empty, the modern doors opened into empty modern halls, and there wasn't a sound anywhere. It was quite a comfort to come across a few bicycles every now and again, patiently waiting in their stalls for invisible owners. It all looked most impressive, if impersonal.

There were just two people about in the university landscape, two men talking on an empty pavement. One of them unknowingly walked into the scene I was focusing in my viewfinder, obligingly providing some human interest among the bicycles. The other turned out to be an acquaintance of Sigurd's from Copenhagen, whom he hadn't seen for years. I know enough about Denmark now not to be in the least surprised by a meeting like this. It's fairly difficult *not* to run into an old acquaintance, if one stands at a street corner for more than half a minute; I was only surprised that it wasn't an old school-friend or a cousin.

## SILKEBORG, TUESDAY

On a tour like this I could do with the hundred eyes of Argus. After all, it's only fifty pairs. My idea at present would be to go to sleep with forty-nine of the pairs and use the fiftieth pair as a skeleton crew. Today we drove through real country lanes in one of the most beautiful parts of Denmark. I stared and stared, but, even so, I couldn't see nearly enough, and I've had to do so much staring of late that I could have fallen asleep at any moment.

Sometimes when I was obliged to close my only pair of eyes today, I made complicated plans for using all the forty-nine pairs I haven't got. There would be one pair for scenery and sky, one for trees, flowers, the crops, and so on; one for people, with an extra pair for use if I sighted any specially strange ones. Then one for looking at fine buildings, and one pair to avert quickly from all the ugly ones. . . .

However, in those little lanes I used my eyes for all they were worth, and then some, not caring if I used up my quota of looking before we got to the official sights at all. The landscape was very open, with scarcely any hedges; we seldom saw another car; and we sailed in the Ford through a billowing sea of Danish agriculture, neatly divided into many-coloured squares. There was ripening barley, ripening wheat, ripening rye; lucerne, flax, sweet-scented clover-- all growing in squares, and none of them trespassing on each other's territory. There were squares of small yellow lupins, which I'm told are grown to fertilize the soil. We passed foals with their mothers, and calves tethered on the roadside grass, and I was interested to see that there *are* brown cows (called "red" in Danish) in Jutland as well as the black-and-white ones of which Jutlanders are so proud. I don't know if the sun was in fact shining all the time. Whenever my eyes were open it was, and my recollections of that little corner of Denmark will always be full of Danish summer sunlight.

I'd seen on the map a place with the unexpected name of Dover, and we steered towards it, as I thought it would be fun to photograph a signpost with that name on, and also the village or church. There were no signposts of any kind, and I soon learned that I needn't expect to see a village, as there wasn't one: only the church. At last we saw a church so isolated among the fields that we felt sure it must be Dover, and drove up to have a look at it. An avenue of windswept trees led up to the church, which



was another of those cheerful-looking medieval buildings of whitewashed brick with a red-tiled roof. It made a strange contrast in my mind with Dover Harbour and Castle and the White Cliffs. Another contrast was the snug little town of Rye, through which we passed later on; it made me think, not only of Rye in Sussex, but also of Rye, New York, one of those spacious, well-kept towns from which commuters travel in by train every day to their work in New York City.

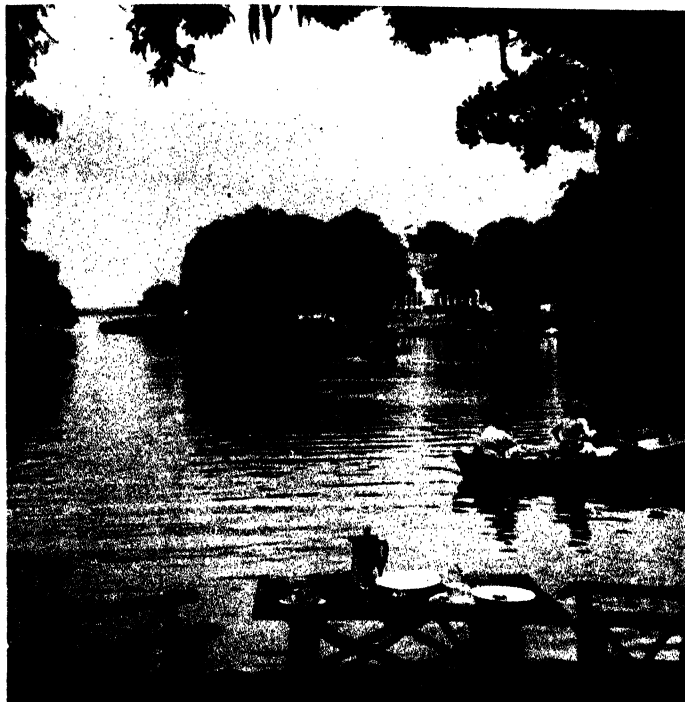
There were no signposts saying "Rye" either, and none to direct us to a place called Svejbak Eel Inn, at which it had been planned that we were to have lunch. It wasn't easy to find the way in these conditions. At last we saw two workmen moving timber, so Inge got out and went to ask them how we ought to proceed. From the car I watched a charming pantomime—I was too far away to hear anything. The two men, when Inge spoke to them, stood upright on top of their tall stack of planks, and raised their caps and bowed with great politeness. Then there was a lot of gesticulation, and finally more raising of caps. When Inge came back to us she not only knew the way to the Eel Inn; she knew where all the signposts had gone to. "No signposts this month," she reported; and then came a phrase which is straightforward enough in Danish, but which in English becomes something like "The Department of Roads is doing its spring-cleaning".

The Eel Inn proved to be most pleasantly situated by the water-side, on a narrow stretch of water which joins two of the lakes of this Danish lake district. There were luxuriant green trees everywhere, both on our bank and the opposite one, and the whole scene was peaceful and (for the moment) summerlike. Some children were bathing from a boat, and two little girls in cotton frocks were rowing themselves about.

Inside the Eel Inn business was brisk. The reason most Danes go there is, of course, to eat eel, and one's prowess as an eel-cater is judged by the number of pieces of eel-skeleton which festoon one's plate at the end of the meal. My petition for a boiled egg was obviously disturbing to everyone within earshot; however, I rapidly broke into English, to show that I was a crazy foreigner anyway, and obtained some tea as well.

I went outside as soon as possible, with camera of course, and in what I suppose was really only a few minutes I had another

*The Lake at  
Svejbæk*



delicious, timeless dose of Danish open air and summer. I watched the bathers and the little girls, and the flag flying from another inn just opposite. A man with a bicycle rode down to the water's edge and simply stood there, gazing into space; so I gazed too, and realized that he was waiting for a ferry from the other side. It soon put out to fetch him. There are ferries and ferries, especially in a country with so many shores and coastlines as Denmark. This one was just a rowing-boat, with one pair of oars, manned by a man in shirtsleeves. It put in to a miniature landing-stage; the bicycle was laid across the bows and the passenger seated himself in the stern, and off went what I should imagine must be one of the smallest units of the Danish transport system.

We arrived at Silkeborg in a thunderstorm, so I didn't take in much about anything as we drove to the hotel. While the luggage was being unloaded, however, a bus drew up in the market-place, and again, unsuspectingly (as at Aarhus), I looked at the

board along its side to see where it had come from. It said, as I read it first, "Place your Teeth in So-and-so's Hands". I began to wonder whether the Silkeborg buses were in league with the Aarhus trams. When I looked again I found I'd missed out a word in smaller print: the full advertisement said, "Place Your Teeth Problem in So-and-so's Hands". The hotel porter looked at me suspiciously, but of course he couldn't know what I was laughing at.

For tourists, Silkeborg town is mainly a base from which to enjoy the surrounding lakes and woods. It feeds its tourists, gives them a place to sleep, and then tells them to get along out into the open air. Looking at a street map on the back of one of the tourist brochures, I realized how very little a tourist can possibly know or understand about the life of the towns which are his temporary headquarters. Beneath this map are listed thirty-eight places, all important items in the town. Skimming through them, I see, in this order: paper mill, bacon factory, workmen's union with theatre; three apothecary's shops, named after Sky Mountain, the Eagle, and the Swan respectively; schools and hotels, of course; an old people's home and a hospital, and all the other buildings necessary for a municipality.

Silkeborg does not in the least attempt to force itself upon the tourist's attention. Proud of its lakes and hills and streams, it urges one to go and look at those. Of the town itself, it says, after due mention of industries, etc., that it is a young town and has no special historic sights, being only about a hundred years old. That remark jolted me across the Atlantic for a moment—to Canada, where last year I made a special trip with my friends to see the very oldest buildings for many miles around—a little town which had just reached the magnificent age of one hundred years. The centenary had been celebrated with great rejoicing. The Governor-General of Canada himself had come to Georgeville, and had planted a tree.

I'm beginning to realize that one's sense of history is required to tick at a different speed in different countries, or even different regions of the same country—and one's sense of admiration too. A traveller is as it were in duty bound to express exactly the right amount of enthusiasm for any famous buildings with which he may be confronted, whether they're thirty or a hundred or three hundred years old. Luckily, he's generally asked in a form which,



*Looking for  
the Ferry*



*On Board  
the Ferry*

as my Latin book used to say, "expects the answer 'Yes'"; and there are in practice quite a number of ways of not committing oneself before one has discovered whether a hundred years means old or new in this particular instance.

#### LATER

In grey, rainy weather we drove out this evening along the Herning road to a spot which has already become a place of pilgrimage for Danes. It is the place where a great Danish patriot, Kaj Munk, was killed by the Nazis. Kaj Munk was a Danish country clergyman, a powerful preacher and also a brilliant writer. He spoke up in every possible way for his faith and for his country, and against the Nazis; and at last he was murdered by the roadside, not far outside Silkeborg.

One goes to a place like that in a spirit which has nothing to do with holiday-making. I think we hardly spoke a word all the way there, or for a long time afterwards. It was easy to identify the place, for even in the rain there was a little knot of people standing there by the grassy ditch which bordered the road. We stopped the car a short distance away and joined them.

There was a simple wooden cross in the grass, covered with flowers, and it looked as though many of the passers-by had brought their own little bunches of flowers and laid them there too. On a Bornholm rowan-tree close beside the cross was a small white notice which everyone stopped to read. While we stood there some of the people went away, but others came immediately and joined the little silent group. The spirit of that very brave man was strong there, and I should think that no one would forget those few moments when they stood beside the roadside cross.

We drove on a little further towards the west before turning back, and I saw that we were getting into a kind of country which I had never seen before—the Jutland heaths. Out here it was bare and bleak, and only sparsely cultivated: as different as could be from the thriving, closely-packed crops in their squared-off divisions that I saw only yesterday. This didn't look like Denmark at all, as I've hitherto known Denmark; and yet I know that

very large areas which are today fertile farmland were bleak, empty country like this within living memory. I've been interested in the Danish work of heath reclamation ever since I first heard of it, and on our drive today I actually saw it in progress. I saw young plantations of fir and spruce; long, thin "hedges" of the same trees to protect the windswept earth, looking like black lace along the skyline; crops of lupins and other beginner yields; and occasionally a field where the soil was so far advanced that corn was growing. It was a small glimpse of a big undertaking. I'm very glad I saw it. It'll be much easier now to envisage the work which was begun by Dalgas and the other pioneers in the eighteen-sixties, and to see what it must have meant to a small country which has to win almost all its livelihood from the soil.

#### SILKEBORG, WEDNESDAY

Never in my life, I think, have I sightseen so intensively as during the past five days. It isn't the way anybody would *choose* to see places, I imagine. It certainly isn't the way I'd choose to see Denmark, grateful though I am for this tour. I know Denmark so well in many respects—it's odd to have to come back and make my first acquaintance with large parts of it (far too hurriedly) when I'm living abroad. But the years when we lived in Copenhagen were almost all years of war or restriction. Travelling about was for me very nearly impossible; so here I am now, in the guise of a tourist, making up for lost time.

And yet . . . I can't ever be a real tourist in Denmark. It's far too much a second home for that. I've read its literature and its newspapers for years; I know its jokes, I have relations and friends in Denmark who are accustomed to my peculiarities, whether in Danish or in English. I know (more or less) when and how to say "Thank you" in Danish, and when I hear a man's official title I know more or less where to place him in the intricate mazes of Danish life. I can't be a genuine picture-postcard tourist in a country I know as well as this.

This meditative mood has, I suppose, been brought on because I have today seen one of the most famous of all Danish sights---Himmelbjerg, the Heaven Hill, or, as we finally translated it, Sky Mountain. This was one of the places which were indelibly etched upon my mind long before I saw them, by the struggle to

produce correct descriptions of them to go under the photographs in a book of pictures of Denmark. It was a worrying business. I was in New York, and Sigurd, who normally functions as an encyclopædia, was in Havana at a conference, so that I had to write or cable to him to be quite sure my facts were correct. And even so, it's been a great relief to see with my own eyes that Aarhus University *has* spacious modern buildings, or whatever I wrote, and that there really is a fine view from Sky Mountain.

Now that I've checked this view for myself, I can state with confidence that it's exactly like the pictures. There are thickly wooded slopes, and a smooth lake far below with bays and promontories. There were clouds today, just as in the pictures, and a tiny steamer steaming along in just the right place. What I somehow hadn't foreseen was that there should be such a lot of other tourists also admiring the view.

There was no lonely majesty about the top of Sky Mountain today. We were there by the hundred—and the authorities are obviously accustomed to plentiful tourists, for they had thoughtfully put up a lot of wooden railings to prevent us from falling off the summit. There was a big car park, a big restaurant, a number of souvenir booths: being a tourist I patronized almost everything, but I couldn't help feeling occasionally that I had come to the wrong place. From the car park we strolled up the pathway to the summit, where people were picnicking or enjoying the view around the tall red watch-tower. I worked out roughly what 147 metres, the height of Sky Mountain, would be in feet. About 450 feet. That is the most striking hill in the whole of Denmark, and almost the highest, so one can understand its name and its popularity.

Standing up there, I tried to imagine what the Silkeborg lakes and hills might mean to Danes who knew them, not as a tourist or a picnicker, but as someone who lived among them or spent long holidays there. I thought of people walking through the quiet woods, going sailing or fishing on the lake, sitting in the sun on a secluded lawn by the waterside somewhere (I've been forgetting about lawns and deck-chairs recently), getting to know special bits of the landscape in every kind of lighting and weather. Their Sky Mountain would bear almost no relation to the place where I was now. It wouldn't be a place where they stopped for lunch and bought a picture postcard. It would be a beautiful hill

which by right dominated a certain part of the lakes and woods; and if they ever came up here at all they'd know how to pick a time when they had it to themselves.

I felt better when I'd established in the landscape all these people who were undoubtedly there. We drove away from Himmelbjerg by another road - and suddenly, as if by a miracle, we ceased to be tourists at a Tourist Attraction, and became our real selves in the midst of as charming a little patch of Denmark as I've ever seen. We came out of the woods on to something that wasn't even a lane, but a narrow, dusty cart-track between the fields. More yellow lupins, more sweet-smelling clover, more ripening corn—it reminded me very much of our road to the Eel Inn yesterday, and not without reason, I found, as we were (it was hoped) on our way to the other Svejgåk inn, the one from which I had watched the rowing-boat ferry put out.

The Ford seemed enormous and rather clumsy in these diminutive rural surroundings, and must have been quite difficult to manoeuvre over the cart-tracks. There were no signposts, of course (we know all about that now, though), and our tiny little lane suddenly branched into two in the middle of some cornfields.



*On the Top of  
Sky Mountain*



As far as we could judge, both lanes would ultimately run straight into the lake; but we left the car where they parted, and all set off on different tours of exploration. Soon afterwards a large lorry came blundering along on the road by which we had come. Folmer hurried back to move the Ford out of its way, and asked the driver which of the two cart-tracks he would like left free. The man looked a bit puzzled, and lifted up his cap to scratch his head. "Well . . ." he said doubtfully, "I'm going to Aarhus."

I couldn't help laughing, but that, I now perceive (from the map), is only because I am ignorant. To me Aarhus is now miles and miles, and days and days, away from us. It was as if a man in a Leicestershire by-road should ask which of the lanes would take him to Land's End. I see, though, that Aarhus is still quite close, and was a very reasonable destination for a man with a lorry, though if I were he I wouldn't have trusted either of these lanes. Anyway, we took the one he didn't take, as we were now headed that way, and soon arrived in triumph at the inn.

It was fun to sit outside the Svejlbæk Ferry Inn and look across the water at the Eel Inn and my other old friends from yesterday. Inge wrote a picture postcard, like a good tourist, and posted it in a little box on the wall of the inn. We watched its progress thereafter with breathless interest, for a postman bicycled up almost the moment it had been posted, emptied the box, and went on to the rowing-boat ferry, which was waiting at its landing-place.

The ferry had a crowded trip today. I was amazed that one oarsman could manage so much. There were no less than five bicycles stacked in the stern, with their owners and a few extra people in the bows. The postman's bicycle was flung on to the stack, with the bag of letters attached to it, and the boat was so heavily loaded that the bag hung down almost into the water. We were quite relieved when we saw him disembark and bicycle away on the Eel Inn shore with his letters still perfectly dry.

The Svejlbæk Ferry Inn, like most Danish restaurants, has a big room for parties, and I saw that a coffee-table for a large number of people had been prepared in there. While we were sitting outside, the party of guests arrived, in a lake steamer called *The Seagull*. They must, I think, have been the inhabitants of some Old People's Home in the district, out on a summer pleasure party. There were men and women in about equal numbers, all

*The Lake near  
Svejbæk Inn*



dressed in their best dark clothes, and all looking most cheerful. They flocked ashore from the steamer, and came at a poignantly slow pace up the path to the inn. Almost all of them used sticks to walk with. I know how wonderfully well old people are cared for in Denmark; I know that this party was having a treat and that they were all probably perfectly happy; and yet I couldn't help feeling sad as I watched them walk along so slowly and so carefully.

A little later on we heard them singing at the coffee-table. That is part of a Danish party like this, and I oughtn't to have been surprised; but there was something about the timbre of so many old voices all singing together that to me, a stranger and an outsider, was almost heart-rending. They were singing a well-known Danish song, "I love the green groves". As I passed their entrance door soon afterwards, I saw all their sticks hung up there; a whole forest of walking-sticks hanging on pegs all round the wall.

In a sandbank just where we'd parked the car a lot of swallows have nests. They were flying in and out very busily, not in the

least disturbed by us or anyone else. They reminded me of the bees which, in another part of my existence, fly in and out of holes in the mud wall of an English country tool-shed.

#### RIBE, THURSDAY

This is a place I've wanted to see for a long time. We're at the ancient Hotel Dagmar, right in the heart of the medieval town, and I'm pleased to see that once again there is a cathedral just outside the window. The view from the windows is in fact so varied and fascinating that I feel I could get to know a lot about Ribe merely by hanging out of first one little casement and then another.

Before investigating Ribe, though, I want to fix in my mind another of the special treasures of Denmark, the Royal Runic Stones from the Viking era, which we saw this morning on our way from Silkeborg. I wasn't a stranger to them, in a way, any more than I was to Sky Mountain, or than I am now to Ribe; and yet I think the impact, the actual surprise, of seeing them was all the stronger because I've partly known about them for so long.

What surprised me more than anything was to find these ancient, unique relics reposing in a most domestic and informal manner in the heart of an ordinary, unbeautiful little Danish provincial town. We left the car in a street that might have belonged to a score of similar little towns: small shops, red brick, red tiles, whitewash. An occasional car or farm-cart or bicycle was all the traffic, and a cat was sunning itself undisturbed by the side of the road.

Just off the road, down a pathway, is Jellinge Church—another of those characteristic Danish medieval churches, whitewashed, pleasant, and unpretentious, standing in its neatly-kept graveyard among trees. And in front of the church porch, quite simply, stand the Royal Runic Stones; while on either side of the church, towering high above it, are the great grass-covered burial mounds which commemorate a tenth-century Danish king and queen.

The more I think of it, the more extraordinary a mixture it seems. Ancient and modern, a thousand years apart: royalty and plain folk: an unparalleled work of religious symbolic art just a few paces away from twentieth-century utilitarianism: and right in the centre of it all the church, ancient itself, much nearer in

time to the Vikings than to ourselves, but still a part of the daily life of the district.

On the bigger of the Runic Stones there is carved in relief a figure of Christ, His arms outstretched as if on the cross. The figure is interwoven with interlacing tracery reminiscent of Celtic art. I knew this beforehand, but it's one thing to know it, and quite another to receive the full impact of its beauty and strangeness, out in the good fresh air and sunlight, in the identical place where the stone was first set up almost a thousand years ago. This is the first representation of Christ known anywhere in Denmark, and it is a strikingly evocative one. The runic inscription on the stone is no less striking, for in it King Harald Bluetooth relates of himself that he conquered all Denmark and Norway, and made the Danes Christians. The first picture of Christ, the first mention of Denmark as a nation—both on one stone, in a Danish country churchyard.

King Harald put up the stone in memory of his father, King Gorm, and his mother, Queen Tyre. The smaller of the Royal Runic Stones, which has runes but no picture, was erected by King Gorm in memory of Queen Tyre; the Queen is said to have had great influence in winning her husband and her son to the Christian faith. The big grass-covered mound south of the church and churchyard is called after her and was probably raised by her son; the mound to the north, which is still bigger, is called after King Gorm.

The grandson of King Harald Bluetooth was King Canute the Great, who was King of England as well as Denmark, and is buried in Winchester Cathedral. Standing there by the Jellinge Stones, one can almost feel history coming alive, spreading out in great waves around one both in time and space, linking together, making real and credible, events and people which have hitherto been only names.

There were two young English girls looking at the stones and church. One of them aimed her Brownie camera hesitantly at the bigger stone from some distance away, then looked at me in the "What-would-you-do-about-this-one?" manner which I've discovered is the sign by which all good shutterbugs know when to speak to each other. I said yes, of course she could get a good



*The Royal  
Runic Stones*

picture, and persuaded her to come closer. I hope the snapshot turns out well. I wonder if she'll know, when she shows it to her friends in England, that there is English history as well as Danish woven into the pattern on that strange Danish stone.

Visitors were coming and going all the time, looking at the stones, looking into the church, going on to climb one or other of the burial mounds. There stood the stones, without protection of any kind— and there they have stood unharmed throughout all these centuries. I said something to Sigurd about how astonishing this was, and he answered, "Well, granite is tough stuff". So it is, and the stones must to most people be immensely impressive; but all the same, I doubt if there are many countries besides Denmark where one could so completely rely on the people themselves to respect and protect their national treasures.

From the top of Queen Tyre's mound we got a good view of the churchyard and church, and King Gorm's mound beyond them. Against the whitewashed church walls the Runic Stones looked like faithful, trusting, prehistoric animals which had turned to stone while they waited and waited outside the porch, century after century, for a master who would never return to them. It

occurred to me suddenly to ask why the stones and the mounds were at Jellinge, and I was told it was because a thousand years ago Jellinge was the capital of the country. Jellinge a capital city. . . . The thought gave a final touch of strangeness to the whole peaceful scene.

King Frederik IX can trace his ancestry directly back to King Gorm, who ruled Denmark from Jellinge, and King Harald, who made Denmark a Christian nation. Denmark is the oldest kingdom in Europe. It has been a kingdom from time immemorial, without any kind of break, and around this unshaken tradition of sovereignty its history and many of its other deepest traditions are woven. Nothing that I have ever seen in Denmark has made me realize this more vividly than the Royal Runic Stones and their surroundings at Jellinge.

There was a fine-looking inn in the main street of Jellinge, adorned with a decorative wrought-iron sign showing a thin-waisted aquavit bottle with two glasses. I think it must be almost the first inn-sign I've ever seen in this country. We went into the inn to get some lunch, I hoping against hope, as usual, to be able



*Jellinge Church  
and the Stones*

to order something light and small and inconspicuous. I was told that the *spécialité de la maison* was something about cold meat—that was how I heard it, anyhow, being by that time pretty tired, so I agreed to that and sank down at a little table. We waited what seemed rather a long time, but I sipped water and Dubonnet alternately, and thought about the stones, and watched a party of Swedish tourists having a good hot meal.

Then the waitress came in with a grave face, as of one who had wonders in store, and said would we please move to another table—this one was too small. We did as we were told. Then she came proudly in with the *spécialité de la maison*. I saw why we had had to wait. There was cold meat, it was true; but the *spécialité* was in fact a mighty throng of delicacies, a cold table of gargantuan size, dish piled upon dish with great artistry, and each one in its arrangement and colour scheme, as well as its taste, an epicure's dream. There were nineteen different dishes. I can remember several different kinds of herring, of course, and different kinds of luncheon sausage: pieces of hot roast chicken, smoked eel, liver-paste, egg-yolks . . . besides all the cold meats. It was wonderful; but we had to eat it. It would have taken a Viking, it seemed to me, to do justice to a meal like that, and even he might have needed to run out and kill a few people in between the courses, to restore his appetite. I wished I'd had Hans Andersen's Hell-Horse to help me, even if he did get a pain and have to leave the table.

In a midway condition between laughter and despair we did what we could to the meal, and to the four different kinds of cheese, with attendant assorted bread, which came in towards the end as a *coup de grâce*. I was very sorry that I hadn't been more wholehearted about wanting only an egg. The waitress was not at all pleased when, seeing that we had apparently finished, she came over to review the situation. We had done our very best, but we'd scarcely made a dent in the provender. She did manage not to scold us, but we understood very clearly that the kitchen department was going to be gravely displeased.

When we got back into the car I discovered that the Jellinge *spécialité de la maison* is so famous it is even mentioned in the guide-book. I felt more and more ashamed of myself, and more and more determined to insist on an egg in future when that is all that I want.

## THE KING' STREAM

There was yet another Dover marked on the map on our way from Jellinge, and I thought that this time surely I ought to be able to get a photograph. But these Dovers are very incomplete. The last was a church with no houses—and no signposts. This one was a few houses with no church, and again no signposts. However, I was somewhat consoled by seeing a place with the name of Folding. There was a Folding Church and a Folding Bridge; and the latter crossed one of the biggest streams we have seen—Kongeaen, the King's Stream. I felt that a King's Stream might combine very well with all we had seen and thought about the ancient Danish kings at Jellinge, but although this region is crowded with history the stream was feeling thoroughly unostentatious. Perhaps that was what made me take such a liking to it. It flowed between green fields, idyllic, peaceful, undramatic, unpopulated except for a few distant bathers and a grazing horse. All the drama of the scene was in the clouds, which sailed majestically against a background of that special Danish blue sky, vividly floodlit by the afternoon sun.



*Kongeaen,  
the King's Stream*



The minute we drew up in the little cobbled square here I could tell I was going to like Ribe. It's very old and obviously proud of the fact, but it doesn't just sit about looking picturesque. From our hotel windows we can see the cathedral and a number of fine old houses; but I can also see a lot of busy small shops, and lorries and farm-carts are continually rumbling past down Great Street beside the hotel. Ribe town is eleven hundred years old, I see, which means that King Gorm and Queen Tyre might or indeed must have been here. I wish I could see them now, holding young Harald Bluetooth by the hand, wandering about down there: gazing up at the cathedral, looking in bewilderment at the cars parked outside this hotel; trying to avoid the bicycles; and flattening their noses against the shop just opposite which sells tourist souvenirs, trying to choose something nice for little Harald. I wish they were there, then I could ask them how he ever got such a name as Bluetooth. However, nothing more exotic has turned up than a few bicycling university students, wearing their white university cap with shorts and white gym shoes, and a lot of housewives with large shopping bags.

Seen from here, the cathedral perplexes me. It is large and impressive, but I can't make out its basic shape. It's partly pale greyish-yellow, partly brick, and has one tall, square brick tower and a lot of apparently unsymmetrical pointed spires and turrets—as if it had been made up out of several different boxes of bricks. I look forward to going down and finding out how it is put together.

#### RIBE, FRIDAY

With less than forty-eight hours to spend in so interesting a place as Ribe, it is manifestly ill-judged to waste twenty-four hours in illness. However, I have seen a good deal all the same. We visited the cathedral for a short time this morning, and I feel slightly better informed now about its design. The tall red tower is later than the stone part. It was built as a watch-tower and place of refuge for the people of Ribe in the thirteenth century; so that explains that. I saw a number of sightseers enjoying the view from the top, and should have liked to join them and have a look at the North Sea. The yellowish stone of the cathedral came from Germany, as did the masons who built with it. The interior was



*Ribe Cathedral  
Towers*



*In Ribe Cathedral*

spacious yet complicated, divided into an intricate balance of light and shade by pillars and vaulting which caught or withheld the sunlight shining in through the windows.

Of details inside the cathedral, I remember vigorous carved figures of St. George and the Dragon in very dark medieval oak, fighting diligently up on a whitewashed wall, with the Princess watching them from a safe distance higher up. Then there was a cheerful young angel's head with wings, on an archway, illuminated by a bright shaft of sunlight; and there were the two extraordinary carved figures who support, with a maximum of effort, the canopy over the choir stalls. My guess would be that they are overgrown trolls of some kind, who have just heard about Atlas and would like us to believe that their job is at least as hard as his.

Outside the cathedral we saw a house which is of special interest to anyone who knows New York—the birthplace of Jacob A. Riis, a Dane who rose to eminence in the United States and did a tremendous amount to clean up the slums of New York about fifty years ago. It is a tiny house, built of old brick with a red-tiled roof. In New York today, by the East River, there is a large new block—or rather a whole group of blocks, a “complex” —of moderately priced apartments named Jacob Riis Houses in tribute to this man who was born in Ribe. I thought as I looked at the little house here that it is probably smaller than even the smallest of the apartments in New York.

This morning, before we went out, I saw from the window something I've never seen before—the *outside* of a house being dusted. It's rather a special house, certainly: the Weis House, an excellently preserved and most cosy-looking building in half-timber, brick, and tile, with a number of small-paned windows. Ribe town owns it and runs it as a restaurant; one must admit that the town sets high standards as a housewife.

The Weis House is almost within hand-shaking distance of Hotel Dagmar's windows, across the narrow width of Great Street. I know quite a lot about the view from our windows now; but this morning I had the view in reverse, up to our windows from those of the Weis House coffee-room. It was quite early when we left the hotel, and I saw that the tray with the fairly substantial



*Birthplace of  
Jacob A. Riis*



*Weis House  
being Dusted*

remains of my *thé complet* was still on the table near my look-out window; the *thé* in Denmark is so very *complet* that it includes a piece or two of fresh "Vienna-bread"—rich, sweet, buttery, cake-like bun, delicious when one feels healthy and hungry, but somewhat overwhelming to a mere toast-eater at eight o'clock in the morning.

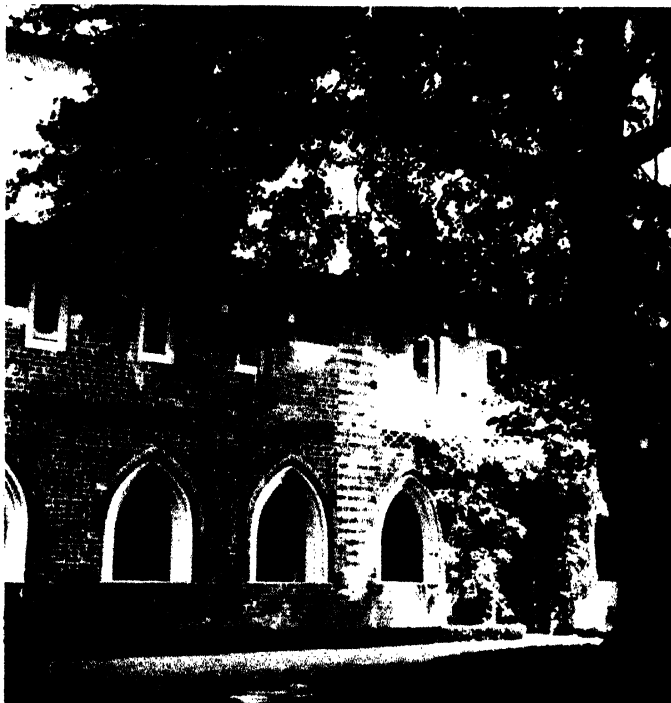
Although it wasn't very long since breakfast, we dropped in at the Weis House, partly to admire the interior and partly to keep ourselves going with black coffee. It was very charming in that coffee-room, but to be honest, what I remember most clearly is the view of our window in the hotel just a few yards away across the street. As I watched a head appeared at the window. It was our chambermaid: a young, cheerful, chestnut-headed girl. She planted her elbows comfortably on the broad sill, and leaned out, munching. She was eating one of the pieces of "Vienna-bread" at which I had looked a little while earlier with such an intense lack of interest.

Well . . . I did really see some storks, while we were strolling through the town. It would be unthinkable to have been in Ribe and not see any storks. They were in their large, flat nest on top of a chimney-stack, and I saw one of the parents stand up and make a serious little speech to the children, who thereupon flapped their wings in a dutiful manner. Storks like Ribe because of all the frogs in the marshy land around the town, but for their winter headquarters they prefer North Africa.

We have also seen the singularly beautiful cloisters of St. Catherine's Church. There was once a Dominican monastery there, and in spite of the Reformation the cloisters have been preserved. Even a tourist in a hurry could not fail to respond to their quietness and peace. They are of brick, and when I saw them the sun was shining on the mellow walls through thick green foliage. There are no pillars or tracery, as there would be in English or French cloisters; there is just this calm brick wall pierced by arched window-openings. The inside of these openings, like the inside of the cloister itself, is whitewashed. The contrast between the rosy, sunlit brick and the whitewash made me think of some heavy rose-coloured damask, rough-surfaced and rich, lined with smooth fine silk.

Wherever there are children in Denmark, the welkin rings (to put it mildly) with their cries for Mummy. The Danish word for

*St. Catherine's  
Gloisters*



mother is *Mor*, but that is no good for shouting, as every child knows, being only a monosyllable. For urgent practical purposes, such as calling for help or encouragement, it has been found best to lengthen it to *Mo-ar*, and then, for extra safety, to shout it twice at least. All the children in Ribe seem to want their mother all day long and most of the evening as well – all those, at any rate, who occupy themselves within earshot of the hotel.

When I hear “*Mo-ar, Mo-ar!*” I know for certain that I am in Denmark. Even trams couldn’t establish the fact more decisively. I heard it for several years at Ved Volden in Copenhagen, both from the front windows and the back. I’ve been hearing it recently in Kongens Nytorv, on the Great Belt Ferry, in Fredericia, Aarhus, Silkeborg – and now here. Another item of vocabulary which could only mean Denmark is also in constant use beneath these windows: the Danish for “What did you say?” “*Tubba?*” gives a sort of idea what it sounds like, if pronounced a little like “rubber”. The entire phrase in Danish is, “What might it please you to have said?”, but it is generally boiled down to this strange little barking sound. They are somewhat hard of hearing beneath

the windows of Hotel Dagmar, to judge from all the "*Hva' behag's?*" I've heard.

An international flavour is contributed by the Ribe errand-boys, whose whistling ranges from "Annie Laurie" to "Oklahoma". And an appropriately medieval flavour is contributed by the cathedral chimes, which burst into melody several times a day. Sometimes they play a hymn; at other times they play an old, old song about the death of the good Queen Dagmar, who died in Ribe in the year 1212. It's an ery tune, well fitted to the uncanny story which the ballad unfolds. From now on it will always be firmly linked in my mind with Ribe, where it belongs.

#### SØNDERBORG, SUNDAY

We have driven through quite a lot of South Jutland. I've seen many places I've been wanting to see for years, and much that I had never expected to see at all, for this has been a peak point of our tour, full of unexpected good things.

One of these began on our way south from Ribe, when we stopped for some coffee at a *Gæstgivergaard* somewhere: a Guest-giver-court, if translated literally, which is an appropriate word for an inn. While we were in there drinking our coffee I saw a poster announcing that a Ringriderfest, a Feast of Riders at the Ring, was about to be held in the town of Graasten. This was something I'd never come across before, and I was greatly interested to discover that it really is the traditional medieval pastime, the same as in the Scottish song about the Bonnie Earl of Moray.

"He was a braw gallant, and he rade at the ring,

And the bonnie Earl o' Moray, he might hae been a king."

The Riders at the Ring, I was told, are the local farmers. Once each year, in every district where the custom has survived, they gather on horseback, with lances, and ride at the ring, or tilt, like the knights of old. I wonder for how many centuries this custom has been going on?

Picking up the local paper in the guest-giver-court, I saw that the procession of ring-riders was due to pass by the main gateway of Graasten Palace before the tournament began, by special

request of Queen Ingrid, so that the three little Princesses could see it. It was clear from the poster and the paper that the whole thing was one of the major events of the district. I developed a keen wish to see something of it all, and my wish was amply fulfilled.

When the ring-riders came past the gates of Graasten Palace we were actually standing at the gates ourselves, so that I had the double pleasure of seeing the procession and of seeing the three Princesses watching it with the Queen. It was a far from formal occasion, and everything had an air of friendly spontaneity. The Royal Family is as a rule on holiday when in residence at Graasten, and it was real holiday weather for the procession, sunny and warm with a bright blue sky. The lane outside the palace gates is quiet and secluded, lined by tall trees. There was a small group of people waiting, most of whom must have come from the palace. There was no procession in sight when we got to the gates, but in the distance we could hear the music of the ring-riders' band.

Near the palace gateway three small girls were keeping a watch on the lane: Princess Margrethe, Princess Benedikte, and Princess Anne-Marie. They were dressed alike in light summer frocks with white socks and shoes. All three had golden heads, sunburned legs, and the air of happy excitement common to small girls anywhere in the world when a treat is about to begin. Princess Margrethe had a friend with her, also golden-headed and sunburned. Soon the Queen joined the party, wearing a light summer dress and cardigan.

There was a sudden stir among the onlookers-- here they come! The Queen took Princess Benedikte and Princess Anne-Marie by the hand, and the little group stood forward by themselves in the sunny lane. We saw the two leaders of the procession come into sight, mounted on sturdy horses, dressed in magnificent costumes, and blowing away nobly at long uplifted trumpets. They wore dark velvet hats with tossing plumes, big white collars, rich doublets, and tall riding-boots of soft leather. Behind them came two other horsemen in similar dress, and then the long procession of riders, with their lances raised. The riders wore dark jackets and white riding-breeches, with a white jockey-cap. They lowered their lances when passing the royal party, as courteously as any feudal knight. Someone who was counting told me that there were





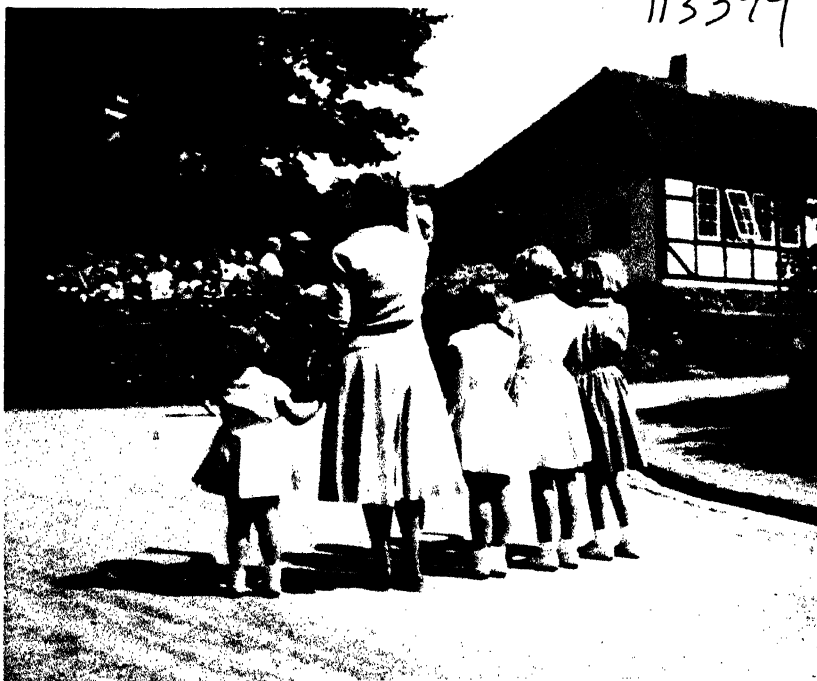
*Queen Ingrid and the  
Three Princesses*



*The Leaders of the Procession*

almost three hundred riders, so the competition for the prizes must have been keen.

Throughout the procession the Princesses stood perfectly still. They all looked as if they were thoroughly enjoying themselves. After the first body of riders had passed came an open carriage piled to the brim with small, fair-haired children, both girls and boys. The little girls were looking highly festive, with wreaths of flowers on their heads. They waved at the Princesses, who waved back, and I should think it would be hard to say which party took greater pleasure in the occasion. Other carriages followed later, with more children. All the carriage wheels were intricately interwoven with green branches and gaily coloured ribbons, and there were garlands hung along the sides. There was a cyclist in the procession also, with the wheels of his machine similarly decorated, cycling gravely along in slow motion. In the stern of one long carriage, the prow of which was crammed full of children, sat a group of very serious musicians, and from one of them proceeded some astonishingly deep bass notes, *bom-bom*, *bom-bom*, which had been puzzling me for a long time.



*The Royal Party watching the Procession*

Well, it was all most exciting. The Princesses watched from start to finish with complete absorption. The moment the last rider had passed, however, all their latent energy sprang back into play. The small figures which had been standing so still began to dance about in the lane, and I could hear that they were urgently asking the Queen a question.

"Mummy: *please* may we go and watch it again from the other gate?"

The Queen smiled and said, "Yes", and immediately all the sunburned legs began to run at full speed. The longest pairs got away first, of course. Princess Margrethe and her friend were out of sight in an instant. Princess Benedikte came a good second. Princess Anne-Marie ran bravely, with the dogged persistence of one who is well accustomed to having to keep up with older sisters, and has no intention whatever of being left out. I felt sure they found the procession just as full of interest when they saw it a second time from the garden gate.

Graasten means Greystones, but Graasten Palace is white: an eighteenth-century palace, graceful and restrained, built round three sides of a square among trees and lawns beside a lake. The planes of its façade and its grey roof are subtly varied, so that there is always an interesting play of light and shade upon the walls. It is beautifully situated, and with its gardens and park, its trees and water, must form a very pleasant summer residence for the King and Queen and their family.

In one of the long side-wings, with its entrance actually in the palace courtyard, is the parish church of Graasten, the old palace chapel. Its interior forms a startling contrast to the sober white walls of the palace; it is actually a remainder from an older palace, and dates from 1709. One goes in all unsuspecting, and finds oneself in the midst of an outburst of baroque activity. Theoretically the chapel was empty when we visited it, but to my astonished eyes it seemed crowded. There were figures everywhere—painted in rows of large pictures on walls and ceilings, carved in relief, carved in the round, modelled in stucco over the whole surface of the roof. I looked up at one point when I was near the altar and found an immense statue of Aaron towering over me, realistically dressed in a long painted wooden tunic and

*Graasten Chapel*



*A Corner of  
Graasten Palace*

underskirt, with a tall wooden cap on his head. It seemed quite strange that the seats in the church should be empty with such a large congregation massed along the walls.

As for angels, I've seldom seen such a crowd of them, and they were all in a state of busy preoccupation, seeing to this, that, and the other at the full stretch of their wings. The central part of the roof in Graasten Chapel is of the kind where angels in white stucco deploy against a sky-blue background, and the baroque designers intended one to imagine the open heavens themselves above one's head. The Graasten one with its angels is singularly beautiful, and I'd have liked to stare up at it for a long time.

It is a far cry from the quiet, ancient Danish country churches I've been seeing lately to this aristocratic, handsome, exuberant place of worship. Graasten chapel is an unusual parish church for what one might call the Macintosh and Bicycle Era, but I imagine that its parishioners accept it with the same sort of unthinking affection as those of a medieval church accept frescoes and dragons and grinning gargoyles. Yet somehow the frescoes and Gothic wood-carvings of the Middle Ages seem at home in this northern climate, while baroque seems always to remain something of a visitor.

However, as I became more familiar with it, I realized that in spite of all its adornments Graasten chapel is, in fact, cool and balanced and most graceful. Two rows of Corinthian pillars, white with gilt capitals, rise from floor to gallery and again from gallery to ceiling, spaced and proportioned with an unusual rhythm. They reminded me of the pillared interior of some of Wren's churches in the City of London. And there is not much baroque richness of colour at Graasten—no bright marble or vivid stained glass. The daylight inside the chapel is clear and candid, as it is inside the other Danish Lutheran churches all over the country. When we left I knew I had seen a church which for many reasons is very much a part of Denmark: a church which the King shares with his subjects, which, like Graasten Palace itself, means a great deal to a nation devoted to its Royal Family, and which leaves with the visitor an unmistakably Danish memory of dignity and clear white daylight.

Just before Sønderborg we passed the big white windmill at Dybbøl, which stands on a grassy hill between the main road and

the sea. It was a beautiful sight against the blue sky, and I am beginning to realize how important a symbol it is in the Danish national consciousness. The Dybbøl fortifications, though gallantly defended, were lost to the attacking Germans in 1864; and it was here in 1920 that the territory of South Jutland was officially reunited with the mother country, King Christian X riding into the liberated and regained territory on a white horse. I have heard of that great day from Danes who were present, and I know that everybody was deeply moved by the scene.

There are some memorial verses written up on one of the walls, and, like every other visitor, I paused to read them. The last lines struck me particularly:

The generations die, but our native tongue links us together,  
The future grows out of our precious memories.

Every nation has its own shrines, the places where especially it thinks of freedom, liberation, and the courage of those who died fighting for their country. Dybbøl Mill looks very peaceful and serene on a sunny afternoon; but I don't believe there is any other spot in the whole of the country which bears a deeper meaning for the Danish people.



*Dybbøl Mill*

## TAASINGE, MONDAY

Until this summer I'd never realized what a nation of ferry-goers the Danes are. They have to be. If it weren't for the ferries children couldn't go to school in many parts of the country; housewives need the ferry to go shopping, men to get to their office; and a large proportion of the Danish agricultural products, the cheese and bacon and butter and other good things, takes a trip on the ferry at some time or another before reaching the point at which it becomes Foodstuffs for Export.

Today I've made the acquaintance of two new ferries: the one from Mommark on Als to Faaborg on Fyn, and the one across Svendborg Sound from Svendborg to the little island of Taasinge. In size they fill in part of the gap between the cosmopolitan Great Belt Ferry, with its trains and telephones, and the one-man rowing-boat I saw at Svejbsk. They also fill in for me a considerable new area of the Danish summer scene.

Nowadays there are long queues in summer-time for all the ferries which carry cars. One may as well resign oneself in advance to waits of an hour or more before getting on board one's chosen ferry. For tourists like me this isn't so bad; it gives me plenty of time to gaze about me, take photographs, and absorb all I can of this new aspect of Denmark in summer.

We joined the queue at Mommark in plenty of time, having grown sadder and wiser by experience, and I saw with interest that the official who directed us was carrying a saucepan in his hand. I couldn't think of any title that would combine a uniform cap and the direction of ferry traffic with a saucepan, but when I voiced this doubt I was told that the saucepan *of course* contained glue, for sticking up ferry notices with.

Crowds of bicyclists and motor-cyclists surged around us, and when at last the ferry came in, and we drove on board, we found ourselves surrounded by a dense sea of handlebars. I've never seen so many bicycles so tightly packed, and how their owners got away from them to other parts of the ferry I still don't know. It was a fine, wild sight. There were handlebars, lamps, bursting suitcases, bundles done up in old chair-covers, bundles strapped or roped on to carriers. Here and there a windswept head stuck up amid the ocean of ironmongery. In one place I saw a pair of trousered legs, with shoes on, sticking forlornly over the gunwale.



*The Mommark  
Ferry*

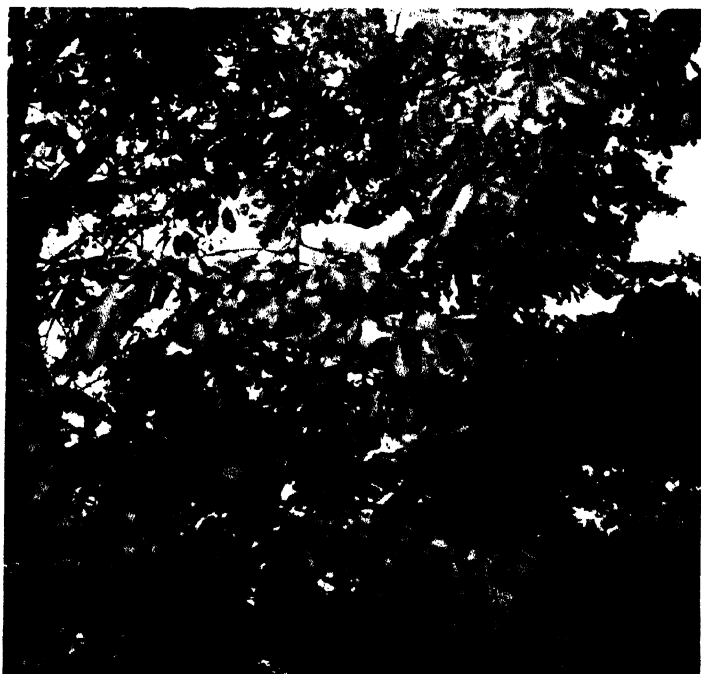
The trip from Mommark is long enough for one to have lunch on board, and there are restaurants for the passengers. The ferry chugged along in the hot sunshine, Dannebrog waving from a white flagstaff, sunlight winking from the bright surfaces of bicycle or motor-car, everybody very hot and rather sleepy, and the engines repeating over and over again, "We're *getting on*, we're *getting on*, we're *getting on*". The next ferry, the small one from Svendborg, took things far more easily, scampering back and forth to its appointed island rather in the manner of a dog running after a ball.

We just missed the ferry from Svendborg, and I was prepared to be full of distress, being now conditioned to think that Missing the Ferry is a major disaster and can dislocate an entire holiday timetable. I saw the ship retreating rapidly, and Taasinge looked quite a long way away across a broad stretch of water. However, I needn't have worried. Before I'd had time to work up any distress, the ferry was well out to sea. By the time I'd thought of taking its photograph, it was no more than a speck in mid-ocean. Within a matter of minutes it had thrown out its passengers in Vindeby,



picked up another lot, and was frisking back towards us, obviously in the best of spirits. So we arrived at our destination not too disgracefully late for tea, and Sigurd, who has left me here for the night with friends, went back the same way and was no doubt deposited in Svendborg with the same light-hearted efficiency. Tomorrow he is to fetch me, and we head for the queues and stern realities of the Great Belt Ferry.

This evening has been a delightful break for an overworked tourist. Fine weather, idyllic surroundings, no noise, and leisure to talk to Pam, stroll about with her, and get to know her children again. We wandered about in the orchard, admired the rabbits, and watched my godson Olaf disappearing up the fruit-trees almost as fast as the Svendborg ferry disappeared across the Sound. After dinner, when the children had gone to bed, we went for a walk, through some woods and back along the coast in the calm, long-lingering Danish sunset. The tranquillity was better than any medicine. We passed thatched cottages, notable old trees, and a seventeenth-century Big House with its chapel and attendant farm buildings, and Pam told stories about each



*Up a  
Fruit Tree*

place as we walked along. There were good scents from the fields, the air was clean and fresh, and the colours of the sunset on the water were like mother-of-pearl. It was one of the occasions when one could easily be lulled into believing that summer weather in Denmark is just something that happens automatically all through the summer months.

#### BELLEVUE, THURSDAY

Having crossed Denmark from the east coast to the west and back again, having seen so many beautiful and interesting places which I'd been longing to see for years, I feel that my notebooks ought to be stuffed with valuable historical information, dates (these, if correct, will have been contributed by Sigurd), and informative items about the Vikings. So they are, to a moderate extent; but as I sit here by yet another hotel window, enjoying the view of the Sound, I find myself dwelling with special interest upon five lists that I made in the back of one of the notebooks. These are:

Names of Danish ice-creams;  
Names of Danish villages;  
Names of Danish villas;  
Names of Danish cakes;  
Striking Danish official titles.

They were only intended as holiday lists, to amuse myself, but I see on looking them over that they do tell one a number of things about Denmark which I mightn't have learned from more orthodox guide-book studies.

#### ICE-CREAM NAMES

There's no mistaking the fact that this is a dairy-farming country. For one thing, people are consuming ices everywhere, all the time, in city streets, out on the main roads, in trains, on the ferry, on the beaches. . . . Ices come stuck on to wooden pins in Denmark, all ready for licking. It's practical, though not beautiful. One could almost find one's way across Denmark without a map, by the names of the local ices. I've seen *Kronborg Ice* (*Is* in Danish), *Hellerup Is*, *Frederiksborg Is*, and other

place-names too many to count. More fancifully, Sorø furnished *Monastery Ice*, and some other place *Elf-Hill Ice*. Then there was a fairly extensive region of *Country Parish Ice*, and one of *Diplomat Ice*. Around Ringsted, where the good Queen Dagmar is buried (she was the one who fell ill and died in Ribe), they very fittingly go in for *Dagmar Is*, with the Danish equivalent of Stop Me and Buy One, which is *Stop og spis En Dagmar Is*. In Ribe they call their ice-cream after the local medieval fortress, *Riberhus*.

Seeing my interest in names generally, two friends contributed the following: *Funeral Society Hope-of-Friends* and *The Hamlet Sock-Suspender*.

#### DANISH PLACE-NAMES

For this pastime exact etymological knowledge would be a grave drawback. I simply entertain myself by translating literally into English the constituent parts of any place-name I have seen. I haven't visited all these places myself, but I've at any rate seen them on signposts (when these were not being spring-cleaned) or on the map.

Happy Scissors	Tooth-bad
Boneless	Tender
Bedless	Intestine
Here-followeth	Stir-tongs
Cold	Drive-around
Bad	Turn-busy
Pudding	Next-to
Weep-stream	Curl-round
Tear-brook	Open-raw
Long Apple	Few-castle

To these I can add Folding, Dover, and so on, plus a lot of names that just look impossible to me, in any language: Mjang, for instance, and Nab and Tved and Glim and Oure and Vork. In fact I find Denmark a wonderful country for not being a place-names expert in.

## VILLA NAMES

A villa in Denmark is just a middle-sized house. It must, I imagine, be a detached one, otherwise it has to be called an in-a-row-house; and if it's above a certain size there are all sorts of grand names available, according to the profession or rank of the inhabitant. But the villas I have in mind are the small or medium houses, more often than not built of brick, which line the residential streets on the outskirts of Danish towns. Their names are written in large lettering on the house itself, not merely on the gateway, as in England; often the name is right up on a gable. As one drives about one gets a touching, if sometimes surprising, impression of how much these houses have meant to their owners, and how deeply Danes agree with the English that there's no place like home. These are some of the villa names I've seen:

Villa Peace-by-the-Hearth	Good Hope
Villa Peace	The Frontier
Pax	Villa Dwelling-by-the-Sound
Gift of Fortune	Hawk
Onward!	Villa Fjord-Gleam
Villa Enough-for-Us	White Dwelling
Villa Phoenix	In-Memory-of-Peter

Where an Englishman might call his house by a French name, *Mon Repos*, a Dane (or a number of Danes, as I've seen) would tend to use an English name. I saw, in English, *Sunshine*, *Home*, and *My Home*. A lot of villas were gallantly named after the lady of the house: *Iris*, for instance, and *Johanne*, and *Villa Doris* and *Dwelling-of-Lise*. The Danish for "peace" is "Fred", and every time I saw a Villa Fred I remembered an occasion when I was exploring a country churchyard on the island of Lolland with a friend. The first tombstone I saw said in large, clear letters, FRED, with the name Jens Jensen written much smaller underneath. The next one said FRED too, and so did the third and fourth, and in fact practically all of them, irrespective of whom they were supposed to commemorate. The local stonemason obviously valued peace above everything, and I shall always, most wrongly, think of that little village as entirely inhabited by people called Fred.

A name that puzzled me a lot on our drive (not a villa name) was what looked to me like Exaggeration Inn, on the Danish Route I. I appealed to Sigurd for etymological help, and he told me that the first part of the word meant here common pasture, the common land around an old village. There are so few inn names in Denmark that I was quite sorry to lose Exaggeration, but even I had to admit that my version wasn't very plausible.

#### DANISH CAKE NAMES

The titles of cakes in Denmark are almost as serious a matter as the titles of officials. They do not alter. The name by which they are called now is the name by which they have always been called in the past, and must always be called in the future; and, as with officials, one is expected to know their title, and to use it correctly at the correct moment. Not to know the full title of a cake, and not to know the proper occasion for eating it, is enough to give oneself away as a blundering foreigner, however much one may imagine that one speaks the language. Even after years of study, I find I'm still the merest beginner. Only recently I heard for the first time of a Sister Cake, which is to be eaten (warm) on one's birthday. I thought that Warm Curly Cake or Birthday Wreath Cake were the only cakes with the official right to be eaten on birthdays, so this was quite a shock to me.

The height of fame in Denmark would, I think, be to have a cake named after one. A mere statue would be nothing by comparison. As far as I know only three people have ever achieved this summit of splendour. Oddly enough all were French. Napoleon easily heads the list, as he has two cakes: Napoleon's Cake and Napoleon's Hat. Sarah Bernhardt is commemorated by a small, very good cake which for a long time I only knew as Sobbenar. I heard customers at the baker's ask for Sobbenar (or so I thought); so I also asked for Sobbenar, with great success. I remember most clearly the laughter of the erudite on the day when my ignorance was discovered; but if I had occasion to buy a Sarah Bernhardt again I should still ask for a Sobbenar, as I know that gets results.

The third Title to Fame is that of Mazarin; and with this strangely assorted trio one might associate Othello, whose cake

(a large, rich, chocolate layer-cake) is much in vogue for dinner-parties. From Othello we take a biggish jump to Mayor Bread. All the buttery-sugary-spicy-bun group of cakes is sometimes known collectively as "soft bread", so that bread in these cases is decidedly not something to be eaten with butter and cheese. Akin to Mayor Bread, one might say, is a kind of cake with the regrettable but very descriptive name of the Baker's Bad Ear. Its shape, and the traditional decoration of red jam and yellow custard, leave no doubt why the name was given. It has another name too, which perhaps squeamish people prefer: *Spandauer*, the person (or bun) from Spandau. A lot of these Danish cakes are named after places, ranging from Spandau and Vienna to Florence and Wales. (In the U.S.A., where they're very popular, the buns are just called Danish pastries; it took me some time to get used to the shouts of "One coffee and Danish" which echo round the drug-store counters.)

One cake in Denmark has no less than three names: Sleeping-bag, alias Day-and-Night, alias Dressing-gown. Other cake names are Comb, Frailty, and Medal. And there are plenty more, I know.

I believe it would be quite easy to launch a new kind of bun-cake in Denmark, as long as one insisted that it was an old one. I have one in mind which is called *Borgerdydskage*, Civic Virtue Cake. There are two highly respected old schools in Copenhagen called East Civic Virtue School and West Civic Virtue School, so the name has dignified associations. The recipe for Civic Virtue Cake, as I envisage it, was whispered on her deathbed by a great-great-aunt of Sigurd's to his grandmother, and has been handed down as a secret through the senior branch of the family. It is the correct—the *only* correct—cake to serve with the first cup of coffee after any outstanding procession through Danish streets. The triumphal drives through Copenhagen of Winston Churchill or Lord Montgomery would obviously be proper occasions in the capital. In smaller towns a procession by the Mayor or the Riders at the Ring would demand *Borgerdydskage*. It is permissible to trace on the top of the cake, in currants, a street-map showing the route of the procession, or else the profile of the notability involved, if that is easier. When I have a little more leisure I think I will invent the recipe.

## DANISH OFFICIAL TITLES

These form a world of their own—a world of precedence, usage, historical and legal origins, formality, tradition, and tongue-twisters which never ceases to baffle me. As I write I can see the Danes on holiday, in their shorts or bathing-suits, with their ice-cream sticks and their beer, untrammelled, sunburned and smiling, as informal a people as one could wish to find. Yet if one meets them in any more formal atmosphere one can scarcely talk for two seconds without bringing in the full weight of at least one official title. I just can't understand how they find time for all the complicated phrases—except, of course, that they don't talk about the weather as unmercifully as one does in England. Nor have I yet found out by what sixth sense they always know everybody's current title so infallibly.

It occurred to me to ask Folmer what his official titles were. I'd expected two, or even three, as I know he's always having to go to meetings. It turned out that he has six or seven. He is:

Secretary to the County Administration;  
Full-Mighty of the County;  
School Fund Treasurer;  
Education Board Secretary;  
Assistant Mayor;  
Fire Director.

He is also something called *Pumpelaugsrevisor*, but apparently is not quite sure if that should count as a title. It's something impressive like Accountant to the Confederation of Land-Drainers (not, as I for some time imagined, a joke about parish-pump politics), so I think it's a pity it can't be counted. However, six should be enough.

Hans Andersen and I see pretty well eye to eye over this title business, I suspect. At any rate, it was in *The Shepherdess and the Chimney-Sweep* that I first became aware that a title could go on for more than a line of print. The carved satyr on the old cupboard is called Billy-Goat's-Legs-Seniorandjuniorgeneralwar-commandersergeant, which, as the children rightly thought, is a difficult title to say, and not altogether common. In sheer mileage I've never found one to equal it. However, I have in my notebook a few good runners-up, collected from the newspapers. For instance:

Mr. Entomologist, former Post Office Controller Peter Jensen.  
Mr. Former Head Porter at the Main Office of the Agricultural Bank Jens Hansen.  
Mr. Aspiring-to-be-a-Typographer Lars Nielsen.  
Mr. Former Royal Weigher and Measurer Niels Petersen.

What with Former, Present, and Aspiring-to-be, one's life can be pretty thoroughly covered. Aspiring seemed to me a very promising line, but I found to my regret that it is severely limited. One cannot call oneself Mrs. Aspiring-to-be-an-Efficient-Housewife, but must aspire along established official lines. Sigurd has just told me, if I understand him rightly, that one of his modest claims to fame inside his own ministry is that he was the last person *not* to start his career as Mr. Aspiring-to-be-a-Secretary-in-the-Ministry-for-Foreign-Affairs. He began as something called *konstitueret*, which makes him practically historical.

If any proof were needed of the high standard of Danish education, there is enough and to spare in the fact that nobody ever falters over an official title. People know exactly which bit to select for everyday talk, and how many inches to use when addressing a letter. They know how important a title is in relation to everybody else's title, how much respect they ought to feel for it, and how to manipulate it gracefully in the impersonal honorifics of the third person singular. And it's second nature to them; they don't even know how clever they're being.

#### BELLEVUE, FRIDAY

Bellevue and Klampenborg are so tightly packed with different worlds that I find it quite hard to disentangle them, even when I'm sitting here and using my eyes, ears, and memory as hard as I can. Partly, I think, it's because Klampenborg is so near Copenhagen; partly it's because so many different kinds of summer holiday are available within a few hundred yards. It isn't only one view that I get from the window—it's a score of views, overlapping circles of holiday which are all independent entities.

The principal Being here is of course the Sound, the sea between Denmark and Sweden. No Sound, no Bellevue Hotel or bathing-beach; and the Sound is undeniably best when it is, as now, a smooth and silky blue. A close confederate of the Sound is the



sun. When the sun comes out, the bathers and coffee-drinkers come out; when it doesn't, they don't. The sun is shining today, and I can see that everything is being prepared to do it homage. A waitress is putting out cloths on the terrace coffee-tables, and clamping them down, no doubt, to resist the wind. The early bathers are frisking about on the white strip of sand, and all sorts of small boats are frisking about on the waveless sea. There's a kind of craft this year which is new to me: a sort of water-bicycle or miniature paddle-boat, in or on which the occupant lounges negligently in a bathing-suit, pedalling himself about the Baltic. From here these vehicles look like spiders having cramp, but I should think it must be fun to proceed across the ocean in that unusual manner.

There is a broad open balcony to this room, and when I'm out on it I hear at least as much English as Danish being spoken on the other balconies. People of many nationalities come here for a summer holiday; we've heard a lot of American and some French, and the cars parked in front of the hotel carry some exotic number-plates. The real owners of the balcony regions are, however, the sparrows. Seldom can sparrows find such good



*Bellevue Beach  
from the Hotel*

catering as they do here, where trays full of actual or potential crumbs are perpetually being put down under their very beak. They arrive in this room each morning at the same moment as the breakfast-tray, and they don't go away until the tray is removed, or until someone else gets a better one.

The restaurant of the hotel is about as cosmopolitan a place as one will find in Denmark, outside the capital itself. People come there in no meagre spirit, but fully prepared to enjoy the food and drink, the orchestra, and the view. The foyer is full of people who last met in London or New York or Brussels or the Far East. I note down with the appropriate lack of surprise that literally the first people we ran into when we got out of the car here were a first cousin of Sigurd's, with his wife and son, whom we hadn't seen for years, and who'd just arrived home from a visit to England.

This *is* Denmark, undeniably; but it's a special bit of Denmark, a special aspect of Denmark in summer that can't be exactly paralleled anywhere else on the long coasts of Zealand, Jutland, Fyn, or any of the other islands. In Danish I'm sure it's described as a *mondaine* resort. Last night, though, after dinner, we went for a short stroll on the deserted beach. We left the bright restaurant with all the talking and smoke and music, and within a few yards had stepped into another world. It was late twilight, and everything was very calm. The beach was all pale lilac and blue. The sea, lilac and blue also, but delicately streaked with green and yellow, was studded with little sails which still caught the last gleams of sunlight and were a glowing yellow. In the big expanse of sky the same tones of blue and lilac, green and pale yellow, were repeated in a different mixture. The island lighthouse which we always call Middlegrunt was flashing its beams, and soon Venus appeared, looking enormous. The air was fresh and calm, and nothing seemed *mondaine* at all. I felt that a part of Denmark which was as ancient, and as deeply Danish, as any other part, was drawing in strength from the long twilight and the summer nightfall, as Denmark always does.

#### BELLEVUE, TUESDAY

We drove up the coast today for a brief visit to Elsinore. As soon as I got out of the car in Shore Street I realized afresh that

this was another place which is crowded with different worlds. There are so many that it takes an effort to make oneself consciously aware of them, not least when one has known the town, off and on, for several years. I stood for quite a long time near the water, looking around me, delighted to see again this particular mixture that means Elsinore, but hard at work trying to make clear to myself what the mixture was made up of. Bellevue is a simpler matter because its constituent parts are mostly different forms of holiday and recreation. Elsinore is an important town, and has been one for over five hundred years.

First in importance, here as at Klampenborg, is the Sound, but here the Sound means ships. Elsinore is at the main gate of the Baltic, and Kronborg Castle is the watch-tower. Ships of every kind pass continually through the Straits, as they have always done, and Elsinore knows a lot about the world outside Denmark. It not only receives ships, but also builds them and repairs them, the shipyard being right in the heart of things between Shore Street and the walls of Kronborg.

The ferry to Sweden is an all-important item in the Elsinore picture. There were queues of holiday-makers waiting to get on board when we parked the car, and a long car-queue, in which I was thankful we didn't have to join, with cars from Britain, Norway, and many other places, as well as a lot of Swedish and Danish ones. The ferry is such an amiable and domesticated-looking craft that in times like this one can scarcely imagine it playing any dramatic role; and yet I remember most acutely what it meant for a great many people during the Nazi occupation—both for those who could and those who could not escape to freedom on that homely, inelegant little ship.

"Denmark's a prison," as Hamlet only too prophetically remarked, and we were all imprisoned within its frontiers—with Sweden so close that one could stand on the shore hereabouts and see the roofs of the houses on the opposite coast. I'd crossed to Sweden two or three times before the war, just for the fun of taking people to lunch on the other side. Then came the war. Then, after the long, dark, unforgettable years, on a bitterly cold winter's day when the ice in the Sound had just broken up and great chunks of it banged against the sides of the ferry, Sigurd and I embarked in Elsinore upon a journey which ended as far away as New York. I remember I had an orchid pinned on my coat—a *bon voyage*

orchid given me by some friends; it was completely shrivelled up with cold by the time we reached shelter on the other side of the Sound.

From where I was standing this morning I could have tossed a penny on to the deck of the ferry, if so inclined, and another penny as far as the entrance of the ornate red-brick railway station. I don't know how many times I've travelled to or from that station. Once during the war I came up here for the day with an English friend who was marooned in Denmark—but who later escaped (not via the ferry) to England and her three sons. We brought sandwiches and ate them sitting on a bench in the sun in a little park, and we strolled about, and bought in an antique shop a small brown English plate which Sigurd still uses daily in New York. We managed to be very light-hearted for a few hours in spite of everything, and I've often remembered since that it turned out we were both thinking, independently, of Walter de la Mare's advice, "Look thy last on all things lovely every hour . . ."

From that same all-purpose bit of street in front of Elsinore station one can start off on a very miniature journey, the one up the coast to Hornbæk and other seaside places, in the little train which has its terminus right in the street. If you want to travel by the train, you just climb up into it; if you should regret your decision before it starts, you could climb out on the other side and go off to the shops instead. It always seemed to me a very irresponsible form of locomotion, but I'm bound to admit that the trains always get to their destination, and even keep to a time-table.

Also converging upon this same part of the Elsinore waterfront, for me, are a few people who never join in the ferry queues or travel by the little train. One is an ancestor of Sigurd's, a several times great-grandfather who built that fine old house at the corner of Shore Street which is now the apothecary's. He completed it in 1642—the date is on the front—and I imagine him taking his evening stroll down by the water, looking very dignified as an alderman should, gazing across at Kronborg just as I did today, and discussing with his acquaintances the possibilities of war, the foreign policy of King Christian IV, and the gloomy outlook for commerce and shipping.

Christian IV himself and the members of his court must often have passed just here when they were in residence at Kronborg. I

should like to see their reactions to the little train. Within sight of Kronborg is the island of Hven in the Sound, where the great sixteenth-century astronomer Tycho Brahe built his sumptuous residence and observatory of Uraniborg under the protection of Frederik II. Tycho Brahe, too, must often have passed through Elsinore, not least when he was getting the royal architects from Kronborg to help him with his own castle. I imagine him riding along there by the harbour, as likely as not quite unaware of his surroundings, sometimes deep in calculations for his catalogue of stars, and sometimes in a rage. After Tycho Brahe's death Christian IV gave away the island of Hven to one of his mistresses.

From the eighteenth-century mansions farther along Shore Street quite a number of Englishmen come to join my shadowy crowd by the waterfront. Shipping brought them here, and I should imagine that they did very well; but they saw to it that English sash-windows were installed in the houses they had to live in (one can see them today), and I'm sure they were always down on the quay to greet any vessel which might bring them letters and news-sheets from home. Mixed up with these people are the handsome, ill-fated sisters and brother from Karen Blixen's story *Supper at Elsinore*, who also lived in one of those grey houses. Last but not far from least comes Hans Christian Andersen, a tormented, overgrown schoolboy who lived here (most reluctantly) as the pupil of a master he hated. Unhappy though he was, he must surely have had some good moments by the waterside or wandering about at Kronborg.

We went on to visit Kronborg this morning---we didn't have enough time there, because one never does, but as we know the inside of the castle fairly well we made straight for our favourite walk, the grassy pathway between the outer fortifications and the sea. The Sound was calm, the sky and clouds were theatrically splendid, and the castle, as always, looked superb from every angle. I made my usual attempts to distinguish the different towers and spires from each other, and to give them their proper names, and failed, also as usual. As for ghosts, the only Shakespearean ghost I could conjure up here on a day like this would be Shakespeare himself, sitting on the grass (with Ben Jonson,

*Kronborg  
Castle*



*Kronborg,  
the Ramparts*

perhaps) and laughing heartily at the mistaken ideas he'd had about the castle when he wrote *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare, Hamlet, and Kronborg are at any rate inextricably involved today, and it seems to be to everyone's advantage. To see *Hamlet* well acted in Kronborg courtyard is an experience one won't forget: something so absolutely right that it leaves mere literal truth-to-the-facts (if any) far behind. Before the war I heard John Gielgud, with Kronborg itself for background, speak Hamlet's speeches while the setting sun lit up the gables and turrets, and the Kronborg swallows darted home to their nests. When he spoke of "this most excellent canopy, the air", of "this majestical roof fretted with golden fire", Shakespeare's words took on an extra meaning which even Shakespeare himself could scarcely have imagined. I have never since been in doubt, when reading those lines, that just exactly thus did Hamlet speak them, and just exactly thus did the brave o'erhanging firmament look while he was speaking.

On our way back from the ramparts we took a look at the courtyard, to refresh our memories, and I ran into two Englishwomen looking wearily around with the unmistakable air of people who feel they ought to cope with yet another Sight before they go and find a restaurant. One of them said to me, "Is there anything special to see here?" It took me an appreciable time to think of an answer that should be sufficiently short; however, I recommended the Knights' Hall, the chapel, and—above all—the ramparts, and I hope they went away feeling a little less jaded than when they arrived. They made me realize how much I love Kronborg, and what a lot it can mean even to someone who sees it very seldom.

#### COPENHAGEN, FRIDAY

Yesterday evening, on our way through Tivoli Gardens for a concert, we stopped for a few moments to listen to the outdoor orchestra. It was playing on a recessed stage, and its audience consisted of passers-by like ourselves, and of people sitting about casually on benches. There was no atmosphere of hushed respect, but the orchestra was doing a good, musicianly job of work in spite of all the competing attractions. The conductor looked a most dignified figure: an elderly man with white hair and an air

of authority, in full evening dress, with an order in his buttonhole. I asked Sigurd if he knew who it was. He said at once, "Oh, that's the man we got the smoked herrings from during the General Strike—don't you remember?"

I did remember. The Danish General Strike in 1943 had been a form of national uprising against the Nazis, and had brought immediate retaliation. There had been some fairly tense days, but they had their moments of light relief: lighter in retrospect, perhaps, than at the time. Anyway, when we and the other inhabitants of Ved Volden were beginning to look rather uneasily at the contents of our larders, a friend brought word that someone had got a box of smoked herrings and was selling them (at a nominal price) down in the courtyard. Sigurd hurried down to join the qucuc, and I hung over the balcony to watch the proceedings. Mr. Koefoed, our benefactor, was not in white tie and tails just then, but in attire more suited to dealing with oily smoked herrings; perhaps it is not surprising that, after so many years, I did not immediately recognize him last night.

There would certainly be no need for me to go on pilgrimage "in search of the past" in Copenhagen. I find myself simply falling over it wherever we go. Partly, no doubt, this is because we've seen such violent contrasts here, of various kinds; but quite apart from that, I suppose it must be something that happens increasingly to everyone as the years go on. Each place which was once new and unknown becomes in time an old acquaintance, and each return to it creates a new set of memories for later visits. This growing richness and variety is almost unimaginable when one is very young and most places are only names upon a map—a bonus which one doesn't appreciate until one gets to it.

We stayed long enough to hear the orchestra make a spirited attack on some Wagner, triumphantly challenging the shrieks from the giant switchback. Tivoli is very much its old self, and the children who were strolling about with their parents are mostly too young to remember the night when the big Concert Hall and a number of other Tivoli buildings were blown up by the Nazis as a reprisal. Concerts nowadays take place in the Glass Hall, and we made our way there through the crowd, past the coloured fountains and flower-beds, and down through the trees.

It might seem strange, if one didn't know Copenhagen, that the place to hear good concerts in summer-time is in the heart of



Tivoli Pleasure Gardens. We'd come to hear a concert by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, no less. The last concert at which I'd heard them was in New York, and I found myself gazing in fascination at the sunburned, intent faces of the audience simply because they looked so different from the faces one would see in West 43rd Street.

It was wonderfully refreshing to listen to *Down by the Sally Gardens* and *The Water is Wide*, and the *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo*. Sitting there in the Glass Hall, with the inaudible crowds peering in at us through the panes all round the auditorium, I enjoyed, simultaneously with the concert, the intricate web of memory by which music links one to other times, other moods, other places. Among many different occasions I was especially aware of the first time Benjamin Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* had been played here, in this very hall, soon after the Liberation. It had given much pleasure to audience and orchestra alike, and somehow the memory of that evening set the seal on my enjoyment of this one; just as this one may for others which are yet to come. We strolled homewards through the gardens afterwards among the coloured lights, grateful for our concert and thoroughly pleased with Tivoli for simply being itself.

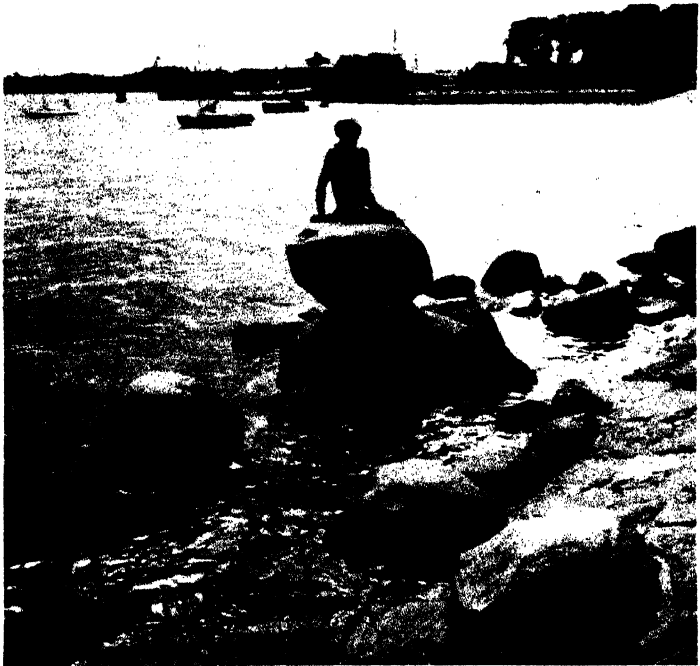
#### COPENHAGEN, MONDAY

To say I lead a double life when I go about in Copenhagen would be an understatement. I lead five or six lives, somewhat fragmentary owing to lack of time and health, but all full of interest for me, and all so mixed up that I scarcely know which role I shall be playing from one moment to another. Out of the corner of my eye I watch people's efforts to size me up in the street or the shops or the hotel lounge. From the camera they feel sure I must be an American tourist; when I say something to Sigurd they discover I must be English; and if I speak to them it is in Danish with, I am told, a slight Bornholm accent. I see them look at my shoes, handbag, gadget-bag, and hat, and try very hard to work out how such a hybrid can have come about, and what it is doing here.

Sometimes I am a tourist for a short while, if the light is favourable for snapshots, but far more often I am a returned wanderer come back to a city full of friends. The time is

unfortunately much too short for us to see them all, though we have already seen a good number and have had some excellent talks with them. They come from many different parts of the world, giving me new links each time between Copenhagen and, for instance, London, New York, Australia, Leicestershire, Devon, Connecticut—even with so remote an event as the Siege of Paris in 1870, since my old friend the Old Lady (with whom I went to tea today) was in Paris as a small child when the siege took place.

We made a special expedition to Langelinie to revisit the Little Mermaid. We were by no means her only visitors, but I did have her to myself for a few moments between one busload of sight-seers and the next. I was struck afresh by her extraordinary quality of aloneness. No matter how many ships may pass by, or how many tourists gaze at her from the promenade, she remains completely alone; graceful, young, solitary, engrossed for ever in her own sorrowful thoughts. Most people, assisted by the picture postcards, insist upon thinking of her in profile, but I realized today that she is beautiful and sad—from every angle and in all kinds of lighting



*The Little  
Mermaid*

The Langelinie Little Mermaid has become a person in her own right now—the dual creation of Hans Andersen and the sculptor Edvard Eriksen. I think that for most non-Danes, anyway, she has stepped right out of the story-book, and now lives more truly than anywhere else on her lonely rock beside Langelinie. When I think of her, it is always the lonely young creature on Langelinie who springs into my mind, and so it is, I know, for my English friends. I've been buying picture postcards of the Little Mermaid for them, for I know that in their heart of hearts they'd far rather get the Little Mermaid by post than any of the Historical Treasures of the Danish capital.

In my brief tourist wanderings I've seldom been out of sight of the water for more than a few minutes. Even at Amalienborg, which I also revisited, the harbour and quays are close by. The four handsome rococo palaces take no official interest in it, facing inwards towards one another around the Square in a grave and elegant manner as if they didn't know the sea existed; but the King and the Royal Family have an extensive view of the harbour and its traffic from their windows all the same, and from the Square big freighters often look almost as if they were anchored off the Palace Garden. The Marble Church, with its green copper dome, faces the harbour directly, looking down towards the ships between the Amalienborg palaces.



*Amalienborg*

We went into Holmens Church, the Naval Church, another old friend, and there also, as is fitting, there is an arm of the harbour close at hand though it is somewhat tamed at this point, with trams running over the bridges and the customary little ship tied up in Harbour Street selling cheese and eggs to housewives on the quay. I'd forgotten the beauty of the wood-carving in Holmens Church. There's a carved figure of Elijah at the chancel steps which seems to me strikingly original, with something in it of medieval calm and even more of that elongated, tortuous, intense aspiration which one associates with the name of El Greco.

Charlottenborg Palace, in Kongens Nytorv, is where people go to see the big art exhibitions but for its next-door neighbour it has Nyhavn, with small ships at the quay, the Christianshavn ferry, sailors' cafés and ships' outfitters, and a constant bustle of coming and going by land and water. After a brief stop in Nyhavn - tourist with camera, waiting for the sun to come out - I went into Charlottenborg courtyard by the Nyhavn gate. In the window of the library of the Academy of Art, just as I had hoped, the familiar Shakespeare-like domed head of its chief librarian bobbed up in welcome, and I knew I had another good talk ahead.

This evening we went to dinner on our own old island of



*Nyhavn*

Christianshavn—in a flat beside the canal, strategically placed to watch the ferry arriving from Kongens Nytorv. Our conversation was a mixture of Copenhagen and New York news, with the refrain which always arises when I meet these friends again. Do you remember the Big Snow? The Big Snow was the major excitement of my first Christmas in New York. We woke up on the morning of December 26th to find Park Avenue buried under twenty-two inches of snow, and until the streets could be cleared the whole routine of everyday life was altered. Hedvig and Viggo were staying at 1155 then because they had been called away from Florida because Sigurd had been called away to Havana; that's the way things go nowadays. We never grew tired of looking out of the window. What had been cars the day before, parked at the kerb as usual, were now just a row of humps of snow. All traffic ceased and instead of the usual hootings from cars and taxis we heard the happy shrieks of children tobogganing down the middle of the road. The big Christmas-tree outside the Brick Church had its lights on throughout the day, I suppose because nobody could get at the switch to turn them off. From the sloping roof of the church an astonishing drapery of snow hung dangerously down over the heads of any passers-by. We expected it to fall at any minute, but in actual fact it took more than a fortnight, and that part of the pavement had to be railed off until it decided to collapse. All these recollections made a piquant contrast with Christianshavn's Market Street (including the shop where I used to buy Sarah Bernharfts and Napoleon's Hats) and the activities of the little ferry and the trams.

As we came out of a restaurant yesterday I heard a Danish woman's voice narrating some long story, and it rose to an emphatic *forte* with the Danish equivalent of, "So I SAID to her, I said . . ." I didn't hear any more; but less than two minutes later, on the pavement outside the Hôtel d'Angleterre, we passed a middle-aged English couple. The man was in front, the woman trotting behind him, and the man was saying to her over his shoulder, "So I SAYS to him, I says . . ." So I said to Sigurd, I said, well, if that isn't human nature, I said, well, I don't know what is, and that's a fact. And so he said he didn't either.

In another restaurant lately we saw a stout, well-fed Dane

entertaining a stout, well-fed Swedish friend to a hearty lunch at one of the window-tables. He made a remark with which I agreed most heartily. "You have to admit that one ought to see Denmark in the summer," he said to the other man. "It isn't much fun in the winter." Then, with a shrug of the shoulders, he added philosophically, "However, then one goes to the theatre and to concerts and that kind of thing." With those few words he brought the Copenhagen winter picture vividly to my mind: ballet at the Royal Theatre, concerts at the Oddfellow Palace, snow, dark nights, cold winds, and all the rest of it. Plenty of interesting events, and plenty of people to take an interest in them; but "one ought to see Denmark in the summer".

#### HOLBÆK, THURSDAY

It is very enjoyable to meet one's friends again, but I find it deplorably numbing to the sense of inquisitiveness which as a diligent tourist I try to cultivate. I arrived in Holbæk interested above all, in seeing some old friends and exchanging news with them, and the result is that my tourist eyes have scarcely been functioning at all. I know how many teeth Mark has cut, and how the house and garden are going to be altered, and my small god-daughter Jane has been in her own fashion helping me to sort photographs. But with something of a jolt I realized that I know practically nothing so far about Holbæk itself.

So I have got out a map of the town, and that has immediately made it begin to come to life for me. Holbæk is on one of the big Danish fjords, Isefjord - well, I know that at first hand, since the garden here runs right down to the water's edge, with a pleasant view across to green fields and little hills on the other side. Enclosed though it seems, the fjord is really part of the sea, and if the necessary ship were available one could sail right from Mary's garden to England. The Kalundborg Road runs towards the harbour, and I see from the map that its name nearer the town becomes Gas Works Road, and then, farther on, Harbour Street. I've discovered that there are four side-turnings all in a row which have each something to add to this picture: Study Lane, Bleaching Lane, Shore Street, and Street-Paver Lane.

It has dawned on me at last that the great majority of Danish towns have a waterfront. An English mind would naturally

expect towns to be neatly divided into seaside towns, river towns, and inland towns; but in Denmark the towns are, with few exceptions, on the sea, or on a fjord, or else on a lake or within easy reach of some kind of navigable water. Copenhagen isn't the only place where ships are continually cropping up in unexpected parts of the view. Mostly the towns have a utilitarian attitude to their waterfront, naturally enough. Soro, I now see, is exceptional in the beauty of its lake and the walks around it, and that must be due partly to the fact that the Academy owns so much of the land, and partly to the fact that the lake doesn't lead anywhere. Holbæk, a busy trading town with a long history, is from all I have seen a typical Danish town; its biography ranges from the Street-Pavers to the Gasworks, from Monastery Lane and Ca Street to Railway Street, with all that these names imply.

The result of thinking so much about Danish towns and villages is that I have invented a Danish district of my own, a sort of Highest Common Factor of all the places I have seen, with names that I feel might be genuine. My region is *Snusbjergegnen*, the Sniffmountainregion. There are townlets called *Snusbjerg-lille* and *Snusbjergmagle*, Little Sniffmountain and Great Sniffmountain, and there is another called *Skulperup*, which is on *Frimlinge Fjord*. There is a manor-house called *Gryscholm*, Shudderholm, a street called The Avenue of Mrs. Postmasteress Jensen, a park renamed in honour of Winston Churchill, and an avenue in which Hans Christian Andersen used to think. If you go down Fellow-Creature Lane, *Medmenneskestræde*, past the Absalon Soap-house and the Hotel Frederik VIII, you will see immediately in front of you the equestrian statue of King Frederik VII and the Ritz Cinema. I know the region intimately, from its co-operative dairy to the ferry which takes one across to *Skulperup* and *Uhaø*, an idyllic little island where people go for picnics; already I shouldn't be in the least surprised if I came across some of these places in a Danish guide-book.

#### SORØ, SATURDAY

Guide-books are essential for telling a traveller what to look at in any particular place, but they can never tell one afterwards

what one has really seen. The best they can do is act as an incomplete reminder. Wandering about in Soro has made me very much aware of this. So has the Danish word for Sights, which can be translated syllable for syllable as *Seeworthyhoods*. A Sight might be unimportant, but obviously anything with so fine a name as *Seeworthyhood* ought to be dignified, memorable, impressive, and all else that is worthy of admiration.

After a very pleasant dose of Soro in sunlight today I came back to this house in the road of the uncle of Bishop Absalon and tried to think what *seeworthyhoods* I had seen. The effort depressed me so much that I knew there must be something wrong. Certainly I had seen the local sights, and certainly I had admired them; but merely to look at a printed list of them, in small type, with names and dates and times of opening, made me feel as dry and airless as a musty old book in a dusty library. That list wasn't what I'd seen or thought or felt about Soro. To cheer myself up and get some fresh air, I took a turn in the garden, and watched the sunlight threading its way through the yellow-green mane of the willow-tree— and suddenly I realized that what I had seen and enjoyed above all else today in Soro was neither less nor more than the light itself.

Of all the *seeworthyhoods* in Denmark in summer-time I would rank the light highest, and Soro has proved a very good place in which to become aware of this fundamental fact. For one thing, there are so many varieties of light here; for another, the light meant so much to the group of writers who are especially linked with Soro, the writers of the "Golden Age", Denmark's Romantic Revival in the early nineteenth century.

We took a stroll this morning just where they used to walk. Down Philosophers' Walk the sunlight was flecking the pathway beneath the trees much as it must have done when Ingemann brought Hans Christian Andersen or Grundtvig there for a breath of air and a talk. A little farther on, where the Academy gardens run down to the lake, the sunshine played upon rippling water, upon delicately patterned willow-trees, and upon swans with their ugly ducklings who were collecting a meal at the water's edge. A very short distance away was the islet called Ingemann's Island, and I remembered that Ingemann's serene and childlike Morning and Evening Songs were actually written in Sorø—songs of Blake-like innocence into which no strange





*Philosophers' Walk*

Blake-like strands of dark experience are woven. Ingemann saw the sunlight both with his eyes and his mind:

The Angel of Light comes in splendour  
Through the gates of Heaven.  
Before the rays of God's angels  
All the black shades of night flee away.

The great Bishop Grundtvig also, I realize, was acutely aware of light; not only physical light but also mental and spiritual light. Enlightenment was what he consciously (and with lasting success) tried to bring to the Danish nation. I've just been dipping into his writings—how pleasant it is to be among books again --and I see him writing passionately, "Is light only for the learned? . . . No, light is a gift from heaven; the sun gets up with the peasant, not with the learned man." One of the best-known of his many

hymns is an elaboration of a hymn from a sixteenth-century Danish collection; both are about "the blessed day", but Grundtvig has poured into his version all the light he can cram into the stanzas: the blessed daylight, the dawn, the light shining on the trees of the forest, the light of life, the golden sun, the red light of evening. Hans Andersen, in one of his stories, described with wonder and delight the first night of gas street-lighting in Copenhagen, and no one would underrate the benefits that gas and electricity have brought us; but all the same, we don't as a rule notice *light* with the same appreciation as they used to in the Golden Age.

Twilight nowadays is often little more than the time when one decides to turn the light on, yet even a generation ago people were wiser than we about such things. I've often seen Sigurd's mother standing in the window, either at Ved Volden or in her own home, facing towards the sunset, very quiet, not moving for minutes on end. I couldn't make it out at all at first, and thought she must be grieving about something. When I asked, though, she would answer peacefully, "I'm just observing twilight". The Danish phrase is a mixture of observing and celebrating, and Mor was in fact doing both; and in this I believe she went right back to her country-bred ancestors, who in their Zealand farmhouses



*Swans at Sorø*

or wherever it might be watched the last traces of the afterglow fade from the sky above their fields, and the glow from the tall tiled stove which warmed them become brighter and brighter as darkness set in.

So, one way and another, my private guide-book to Sorø and the surrounding country would have to include its Seeworthy-hoods mainly in terms of their leader and chief showman, the light itself. It's my camera as much as anything that has made me appreciate this fact. No light and shade, no photograph: that harsh truth makes one use one's eyes as never before, especially when time is so limited. A flat, grey day reduces me to almost worse despair than rain, because there are all the things one has wanted to photograph, the genuine article, visible, dry, accessible—and useless to my camera. It can scarcely bother to reflect them in its viewfinder, so grey and lifeless do they look.

However, today the light has come out in full refulgence to give us a festival. Light on Philosophers' Walk and light on Sorø Lake. Light on the long façade of the Academy and the broad flight of steps which leads down to the gardens. Light on the tall trees of the avenues. Inside Absalon's great monastery church the light had complicated missions to pursue, picking out the full splendour of massive brick pillars and arches, showing up in all its beautiful simplicity the moulding of an ancient doorway, giving to Bishop Absalon's monument a transitory gleam which seemed to say, "I may be stone now, but I was very much alive once, and if I hadn't been you wouldn't be walking and staring about you in this church today".

At the old monastery gateway the sunlight threw into prominence the step-gable of the roof, and made a dark, cool tunnel of the opening through which one leaves Academy territory and goes out into Sorø town. I've seen Sorø often enough in grey weather, when everything looks flat and one's mind goes flat to correspond; but on a day like this, when the sun and the light are in possession, everything which has intrinsic worth bursts out into full brilliance.

In my experience one has to look at the shopping streets of any small Danish town with an eye that is both selective and indulgent if one wishes to find them interesting. The spectacles one ought

to have should be not merely rose-coloured, but provided with a number of black stripes for blotting out the things one would prefer not to have to look at. Preserve us (as one says in Denmark), I don't mean that the streets are not worthy of all admiration, with the notable exception of aesthetic admiration. They are lined with trim little shops, which are clean, tidy, and often so old-established that the older inhabitants of the town still call them by the name of a defunct proprietor, and remember when they used to be given the Danish equivalent of a farthing and sent there by their parents to buy liquorice drops on Saturday mornings. One shop may be noted for its home-made liver-paste, another for its week-end cream buns, another because the proprietor and his wife have recently celebrated their silver wedding, another for the high quality of its knitting wool. These are the important things of life, and whether the shop is basically ugly or good-looking is admittedly an almost meaningless question from the residents' point of view.

But what *is* there about Danish shop-fronts? Or what isn't there, rather? I have often puzzled over this. They went wrong somewhere; they got a rush of progress to the head, I imagine, in some era of unfortunate taste; and as they are all made of alarmingly durable materials they will I suppose remain as they are until, in a couple of hundred years or so, tourists begin to find them quaintly pretty and take snapshots of them. English shop-fronts can be ugly too, heaven knows, but at any rate there are generally some well-proportioned old buildings left in the average provincial street, whereas this awe-inspiring wave of progress in Denmark seems to have swept almost everything else away. American shop-fronts can be ugly too, but, like everything else in America, they keep changing, and moreover so much energy goes into selling people things they never knew they wanted that the basic outlines of the shop are often quite hidden in a cloud of bargain announcements.

Sorø has its share of both good buildings and bad ones, but the outbreak of progress that affected it seems to me to have drained all individuality from its main street. The same thing has happened in many other places in Denmark. One could change round the principal shopping streets in almost any of the towns I've seen lately, putting, say, a Holbæk one in Sorø and a Silkeborg one in Ringsted, and I honestly believe that for an hour or two

in the early morning, before the burghers had rubbed the sleep from their eyes, nobody would be any the wiser. And Sorø's main street *must* once have looked more interesting, situated as it is on this stretch which joins the Academy grounds and the town's broad *allé* of shady trees. When one comes out of the Monastery Gateway nowadays one just has to take a deep breath and mentally whisk out one's rose-and-black spectacles. Or better still, if possible, one should simply not look, just as if one belonged to Sorø and just as one always does in one's own home town: concentrate on the latest Sorø fashions displayed in the windows, compare the price of vegetables in this greengrocer's and that, and fix the remainder of one's attention upon not being run down by the bicycles.

One shop has disappeared since we were last in Sorø, and I greatly regret it. It certainly had individuality. It was a little brick house, basically a shoe-mender's, and was run by an old and grimy hermit who kept most of his stock of leather in the porch and spreading down the steps. He used to sit on the front doorstep mending shoes, taciturn in the extreme. He never spoke if he could avoid it. Sometimes a handwritten notice saying *No More Shoes*, or words to that effect, would be placed on the path inside the gate, and then no one would dare to approach, even if he was sitting on the doorstep.

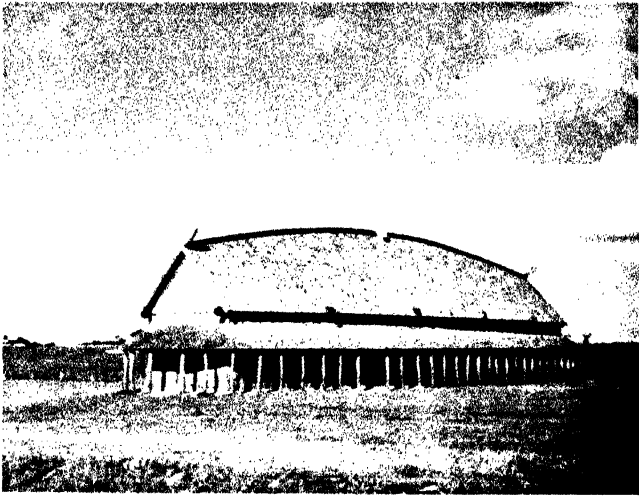
Inside the house, in what should have been the main sitting-rooms, was a junk shop. The cobbler gave the impression that he loathed all his stock and all his customers about equally; however, he would ungraciously allow one in to look round, and to pay him some small sum for anything one might select. I never went in there without finding some treasure—once I picked up a little sugar-basin, dark grey with dirt and neglect, which, when washed and polished, proved to be of exactly the same design as an English silver cream-jug I'd had for years, and which settled down among my things as if it had at last come home. I never knew where the old cobbler's queer treasures came from, and I don't think I ever saw another customer.

We went for a drive this afternoon, still under the kindly auspices of the bright Danish sun. It's harvest-time now, and the fields look lovely—though I can quite understand that the farmers



*Harvest  
Fields*

don't look with the same admiration as I do upon the immense clouds which make the weather so unreliable. We drove to Trelleborg, to see the big Viking fortress from which in all probability, somewhere around the year 1000 A.D., the warriors of Sweyn Forkbeard set out to conquer England. The great circular earthworks looked very green and domesticated today, surrounded by the golden stooks of the harvest and inhabited only by grazing sheep. Since I was there last an exact, full-sized reproduction of one of the original wooden barrack-houses has been built just outside the fortress. It's a beautiful shape, with a curving oaken roof that reminds one of a ship, and a kind of veranda all round which has a strangely modern look. There were sixteen of these barracks inside the fortress, mathematically arranged in four squares of four apiece; plenty of room to house a sizeable army of those unpleasant Vikings. While the sheep scuttled away from me on the sunlit wooden veranda I couldn't help feeling heartily sorry for the poor inhabitants of eastern England (including Leicestershire) so soon due to be conquered, in retrospect, by the



*Viking Baryacks  
at Trelleborg*

efficient warriors who, I felt, might be moving in at any moment to this desirable fortified residence.

On our way back we revisited another relic of the ancient days which is large and circular and grass-grown—a big burial mound, very like the royal ones at Jellinge. There's a fine view from it right across West Zealand to the Great Belt. I remember that last time we went there we sat on its flank among poppies, daisies, and bright blue chicories and cornflowers (it rises from a cornfield) and admired the view and ate chocolate. That doesn't upon reflection seem quite the right way to behave to a burial mound, but fortunately I didn't think of it at the time.

Close by is a village with the impressive name of Castle's Mountain Town, which we explored a little. The only mountain visible was a gentle eminence upon which the village church was built, but we climbed this in a stout-hearted manner, and were well rewarded. The medieval church is whitewashed, with white step-gables and a red-tiled roof; and the long rays of the afternoon sun were bringing out unexpected beauty almost everywhere one looked, from the rough texture of a whitewashed gable to the strange curve of a whitewashed flying buttress. The square white tower positively shone against the shining blue sky, and from our gentle little mountain we had a fine view over a great, calm sea of harvest fields, also glowing in the warmth of the sun.

Sunny days, I am sure, *are* longer than drab ones—in their power to expand in one's memory, to efface recollections of rain and cold and insist that the places we saw in sunlight were the places as they really are. I've seen it for myself in the chequered good and bad weather of this summer holiday. I'm not going to remember much about the rain, except as a joke, any more than I'm going to bother with all the hours I've spent feeling ill. This isn't naïve optimism; it's just a fact, hammered into my head, not once but many times, by the tremendous power of the light. "Beautiful and radiant with great splendour", said St. Francis, giving thanks for Brother Sun as the wisest men have done in every age and every creed. Beautiful and radiant with great splendour, I have seen the sunlight giving life and strength to the Danish countryside and people in the summer, and I shan't ever forget it.

SORO, TUESDAY

It surprised me quite a lot when I first discovered that a number of the Danish medieval churches are built to exact *Roman* measurements. They look so very Danish that one tends



*Flying  
Buttress at  
Slots Bjergh;*



to forget they might have had connections with places farther away than the next little town. Soro Church is based upon measurements in Roman feet, and so are many others that I have seen. Ringsted Church, to make the plot even more complicated, is based upon Greek feet. And the fortifications and barracks at Trelleborg, designed with no pious motives, also conform exactly to Roman measurements.

Today we have been to the village of Bjernede, quite close by. The church there is round, which is unusual but not unknown. There are, I believe, seven round churches in all in Denmark, four of them on the island of Bornholm. They made useful fortresses when times were bad. One can see Bjernede from the main road and railway line to Copenhagen, and I sometimes wonder what newly arriving tourists think it is. Unless warned in advance, one would hardly be likely to guess that it is nearly eight hundred years old. Bjernede too is based upon the Roman foot. It is a striking little building, solid and a trifle dumpy, but possessed of a kind of archaic elegance. It was built by one of Absalon's relations, Sune Ebbeson, whose parents had previously built a wooden church upon the same site; so this has been holy ground for a long time.

Sune began his building in stone, and I'm sure that everyone who came to watch the work must have agreed that this new idea of using stone was a very good one, far better than wood. But two much bigger churches were going up at the same time a few miles away, Ringsted on one side and Soro on the other, and they were being built of an even more up-to-date material, brick. The Danes had only recently learned how to make bricks, and in a country with almost no stone available this sudden power to create a wealth of strong, non-inflammable building material was of the greatest importance—as it has been ever since. There came a day, obviously, when Sune could no longer bear to be outdone by all the modernists. I say obviously, because one can see for oneself that half-way up the circular wall the material changes from stone to brick. I don't think I've ever seen a change of mind more enduringly recorded.

On the way back from Bjernede we saw a sight which I still find fascinating, although I've seen it often enough before. It was a half-finished building—a large one, as it happened, a new Home for the Aged. On top of the unfinished roof-tree, visible from



*Bjærnede Church*



*Bjærnede  
Village Pond*



*Wreaths on  
the Roof-tree*

far away, was a tall pole on which were hung three large green wreaths, the largest at the bottom, then a medium one, and a smaller one at the top. Above them waved a big Danish flag.

The meaning of this sign would be clear to every Dane. A new house is going up. The roof-tree has just been completed, and there has been a party to celebrate the occasion. All the men who are at work on the building were invited, the owner was host, and in the still roofless house drinks were served, with "wreath cake", and the appropriate toasts were drunk. The name of this wreath-and-flag sign, and of the whole ceremony, is *Rejsegilde*; the wreaths and flagstaff are put up when the roof-tree makes the empty shell into a house, a real entity.

How old the custom is no one knows, but I should guess it's as old as Denmark. One could easily imagine the Vikings celebrating raising-parties in Trelleborg as roof after roof went up on their fine wooden barracks. I've never come across a Roof Raising in England, but oddly enough they do have them in New England in the U.S.A. They fasten a little evergreen tree to the roof-tree, instead of three wreaths; otherwise the ritual seems exactly the same as in Denmark.

One evening, when we were driving back to Sorø along this same stretch of road, I saw an elderly lady bicycling along. Her grey hair was elegantly waved, she had on a silk summer dress, and

she was smoking a cigarette. As she bicycled she led behind her on a rope six brown cows. The cows were very quiet, she was very quiet, and obviously no one regarded this performance as anything out of the ordinary. From her dress and deportment I deduced that she was just about to go out to dinner, and was merely bringing home the cows before the party began.

#### COPENHAGEN, SUNDAY

It's very nearly the end of my summer in Denmark. This time tomorrow we should be on board the Esbjerg-Harwich boat, *en route* for England. To say one's mind is kaleidoscopic after a holiday like this would be unfair to kaleidoscopes, with their genius for evolving symmetry out of any little clutter of small objects, from paper-clips to scraps of coloured glass. However, I have the scraps, and plenty of them, and I hope that I shall find a design in them when I have leisure to look them over.

It's an odd chance that our last visit in Denmark this time has been to the flat on Christianshavn where we used to live--an unplanned bit of symmetry. We know the present inhabitants of the flat well; in fact they also are colleagues whom I last saw in New York.

The flat looked much nicer than it used to when we lived in it. Our furniture was too big, and we had then, as always, too many books. The present inhabitants have just the right kind of furniture for a modern Danish flat. The sitting-room looked spacious, and the dining-room, to my amazement, had become *large*. On the marble slab in the window where plants ought to be grown, there were--of course--plants, all growing like mad in just the right direction. I didn't exactly look at them with awe, for I knew that they'd grow for any good Danish housewife who gave them the proper attention; but I thought of all the flower-pots I'd forgotten to water in my time, and of the courageous Paradise-tree which survived all those years of neglect, and was taken away tenderly, like an invalid, by one of the ladies from the removal firm. It's probably still alive. There's a new Paradise-tree in the Ved Volden window-sill now, healthy and shining, a credit to the neighbourhood.

The view from the window still contains the old ingredients: trams, the Gentlemen's and Boys' Outfitting Shop, the ramparts

covered with grass, the annoying huge advertisement on the side of a building, seagulls on the roof, ducks on the pond, and so on. The willow-tree by the pond is much bigger now than it used to be, and probably serves as an entire forest for the Ved Volden children who play about beneath it. The sandpit is still there; it was raining this afternoon, so all was quiet, but I could without difficulty supply from memory the shouts and squeals and sudden wails for "*Mo-ar*" which would normally arise from it.

I had only time for the present this afternoon, and none at all for the past, which I think was a very good thing. When one has watched war, foreign occupation, and at long last liberation and peace, all from the same windows, there is too much to think about. We paid a rapid visit to the rest of the flat. It looked much nicer everywhere than in our day. The only signs that we had ever lived there were a wall mirror and a towel-rail in the bathroom which had moved with us when we went to Copenhagen from London.

From the kitchen balcony I looked up at a very old friend, the green-and-gold spire of Our Saviour's Church, and down at the Street of St. Anne. There, irrespective of the weather, children were crying for their mothers, and a number 8 tram squeaked wearily past as if it had done about as much as anyone ought to expect of it on a Sunday afternoon. It was heartening to see the old Christianshavn existence going on so briskly, with not a



*View from  
Ved Volden*

*Angel in Our Saviour's  
Church, Copenhagen*



duck or a seagull or a tram or a bicycle missing in the picture I had known so well.

Our Saviour's Church was a good neighbour to us while we lived at Ved Volden, in very many ways. I'm glad I had time for a brief visit to it also, though no visit is necessary to revive my recollections. It was good to see all the musical angels again, and the two elephants still patiently supporting the intricate organ-loft, and to see how, even on a grey day, the whole lofty space of the church is full of clear, fresh daylight. But one memory above all has etched itself into my mind in this church, to such an extent that I can scarcely even read the name of Our Saviour's on some chance page without recalling the scene in every detail. It is the memory of Aksel Schiøtz singing Handel's "Comfort ye, my people" to a crowded churchful of Danes during the darkest days of the Nazi occupation.

He stood in one of the richly carved balconies of the organ-loft, in full evening dress as was right and proper. It was quite

strange to see a real human being (and somebody we knew, at that) all alone among the carved allegorical figures, the foliage, and the organ pipes, the whole superstructure apparently dependent upon the goodwill of two grey elephants. The organist was up there too, but he was hidden, and I thought I saw Aksel Schiøtz peering through some long vista of wood-carving as if to make sure that some other living person was up there besides himself.

Then he began to sing, in English, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God". His clear tenor filled the big church without effort, and he sang the words as if they were newly minted that moment for the consolation of people in a war-darkened country. One could feel the impact immediately upon the entire gathering. "Comfort ye, comfort ye. . . ." Faith and hope came pouring through the music. Nobody could possibly miss them, or the extra overtones which were given by the sound of just this music in this church at this time. For those of us who were English it was almost a physical shock—a shock of beauty and hope, a gift of courage, that can never be forgotten.

The whole of the programme was like that, though of course the rest was in Danish. I remember a hymn by Kaj Munk, about light and darkness, war and peace—the mighty problems which were troubling everyone. And later in the evening came another memorable moment, when Aksel Schiøtz sang the old Watchman's Song which is played by the chimes of Our Saviour's at midnight. Another prayer to God, for help in the hours of darkness, protection for the Royal House, protection for all of us, great and small alike, from the force and oppression of the enemy. Once again he had all his hearers with him, heart and soul. I have never heard the Watchman's Song since that evening without hearing his voice in it.

#### COPENHAGEN, MONDAY MORNING

We are back where we started, in a way—looking out on Kongens Nytorv from the Hôtel d'Angleterre, preparing for departure, and surrounded by our faithful suitcases. In a few minutes we shall be leaving for the station, but Leicester has burst a hinge and Sigurd has had to go out and buy a strap to hold

it together. All holidays seem to be punctuated with emergency repairs to one's luggage. I've attempted some pretty desperate first-aid in my time, with such objects as a safety-pin or an uncoiled paper-clip. It's generally the newer suitcases which break down first; good, hardworking Leicester (which came from Leicester more than a dozen years ago) has never had an ailing moment until now, and I hope the saddler in Market Harborough will be able to repair it.

Theoretically, some of the suitcases ought to be empty by now, but it is a well-known fact (although one never allows for it) that suitcases invariably get fuller and fuller as a holiday proceeds. However, they are all ready now, packed and locked and labelled. I like to go on using a label as long as possible, and have managed to preserve from Sigurd's attempts to throw it away the label on Overnighter, which records: Montreal, New York, London, Great Malvern, Farnham, Market Harborough, Copenhagen via London. All are now crossed out in favour of the present journey, but I'm going to cut that label off when the names get to the top, and keep it.

It's easy enough to write down in my notebook "about to leave Copenhagen for England", but actually at the moment it doesn't mean much except for a feeling of fatigue and a slight anxiety about the strap for Leicester. The realization that we are leaving Denmark probably won't come until we are well on the way. Taking a hint from the chambermaid at Ribe, I've kept the Vienna Bread from this morning's breakfast tray, and am eating it to stay me for the journey. We shall have lunch on the Great Belt Ferry, I suppose, and dinner on the boat just after we leave Esbjerg. There's time for a last look out of the window. I look at it all, the wide sweep of the King's New Market from Great King Street (with tram) on the left to the Royal Theatre on the right. The flat-topped trees are still green, though the first hints of autumn can't be far away. The trams are busy, the bicycles are busy, the black shiny taxis are waiting by the taxi-telephone. The red-and-white flags are flying against a blue summer sky. I say a quick *au revoir* to everything, and feel it would be appropriate to add the curiously double-edged—but always politely meant—Danish thank-you formula, "Thank you for *this* time".



ON BOARD THE "KRONPRINSESSE INGRID", MONDAY  
EVENING

The train journey today hurried me past a great many different things. All the way across Zealand and Fyn we were retracing the route of our holiday car trip, and to do it at such speed made me feel that our pace on that trip had in fact been leisurely compared with the speed with which one has to whisk about nowadays. Roskilde, Ringsted, Sorø, Korsør, Nyborg, Odense, Fredericia—they all flicked past the window with casual, impersonal ease; yet behind the names, for me, were not only our recent holiday but a crowded procession of people and events from the past.

Today, for instance, we passed Ringsted less than an hour after leaving Copenhagen. All one sees is a long platform, a glimpse of the big church on its hill, the brick station buildings, the station name, and some notices. The whole thing is over while one might be wondering if the North Sea would be calm and when to take the first anti-seasickness tablet. But Sigurd's mother and his old home are always in my thoughts when we pass through Ringsted. I can almost see waiting for us on the platform a small, serene, elderly Danish lady, her face always lighting up in welcome when she saw us, a vehicle of some kind always on hand outside the station to hurry us home for a few restful days in a house that was crammed with books. That home has gone now, but its memory hasn't.

Although Ringsted is so close to Copenhagen, as this Lightning Train reckons time, it was a long way away in wartime, and for assorted unpleasant reasons there were periods when the journey was pretty well impossible. As for England, towards which we are now travelling in so easy and matter-of-fact a manner—that was so bitterly far away during the war, when we were entirely cut off, that I couldn't even bear to think about the journey there. I remember well how, when things began to look brighter, I dared one day to take out an atlas and look at the route from Copenhagen to England. It was only about six hundred miles; it might as well have been six thousand just then. However, freedom did come back to us, and there came a day when, from the windows of a Dakota of the British Transport Command, I watched those miles being demolished at a wonderful pace, and saw England once again. Most of us nowadays have been through enough to know that good fortune isn't just something to take for granted; I know

myself how gratefully and actively I enjoy every spell of "calm sea and prosperous voyage".

We had a warm send-off from Copenhagen—something for which I was not prepared at all. Kind friends and good wishes, flowers, chocolates, a lot of talk; I felt very pampered and not a little confused. There was the usual hubbub of Danish, British, American, and other travellers, setting off for all parts of the world from Jutland to the United States, and the platform was crowded as usual.

Last time we left Copenhagen on this train a friend brought me a handbook on Scandinavian mythology. He'd happened to say he was reading about the Norse gods with his son (aged about five then) and I'd remarked that it was about time I caught up with Teddy in that field; so he very thoughtfully turned up with a book, and I spent the journey across Denmark and the North Sea in the unexpected company of such beings as Odin, Thor, Balder, and Hejmdal. It went oddly with Danish railway stations and customs officials and the smiling cleanliness of the Esbjerg-Harwich boat, but we were, after all, on the ancient route of the Vikings, so I felt that the deities of Asgaard must have done this journey many times before.

The gods who look after good weather were unmistakably on duty today. The Danish countryside had that glowing, sun-soaked quality which I first noticed on our drive across Fyn just over a month ago. The yellow cornfields and stubble-fields glowed, which is understandable enough, but so did the fields of cabbage, which are blue or green. The white towers of village churches shone out above the glowing little red houses clustered below them. The imitation Gothic transformer towers and water towers glowed just as diligently. There didn't seem to be a corner anywhere, even in the shadows, that wasn't saturated with the warm, nourishing sunlight.

On several of the stations there was a large notice to say "Cycling on the platforms is forbidden". I wonder if there can be any other country in the world where that notice is required? And I wonder what the bicycle population of Denmark is? As large as

the human population, I dare say—possibly larger, especially now that they've taken to bicycling on the sea.

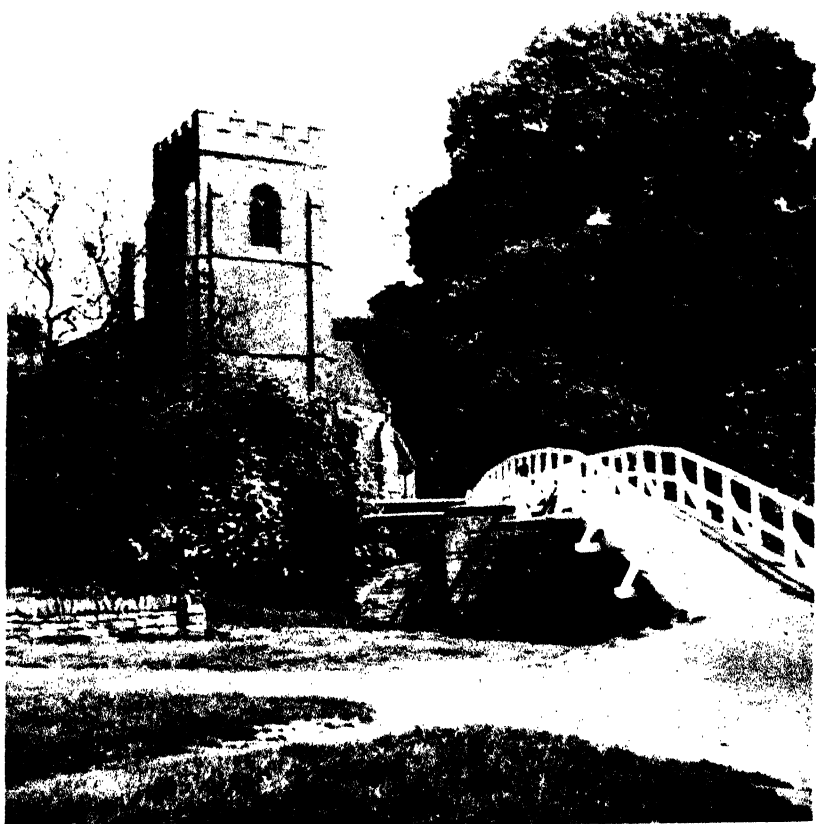
We've lost sight of the coast of Denmark now, and are well on our way to England. It's a calm evening. I always enjoy all the contrivances for keeping ship-shape with which one is surrounded in these cabins. I've put something or other in or on every net, hook, shelf, or pocket that I can find, and must settle down to write some thank-you letters. My only regret is that I haven't a large gold watch to hang on the special hook which is provided for large gold watches, and I've nothing else that seems to fit there. Calm sea and prosperous voyage. . . . Bicycles, cornfields, friends and ferries, churches and palaces, swans, Vikings, Hans Andersen—I can take my harvest along with me, and go on enjoying it for as long as I please.

#### HARWICH STATION, TUESDAY

The boat-train to London is beginning to feel it is time to start. People have been streaming out of the customs hall—the same people as we saw on the platform in Copenhagen, only now a number of the roles have been reversed. Danes who saw nothing to interest them in their home country are now tourists abroad and are staring like mad; Britishers who were staring hard at their last glimpses of Abroad are now at home again, only interested in reading an English newspaper. As for me, although I'm still fully aware of Denmark, I just feel that I've come home. Before the train came in I was standing on the platform, looking out over the flat green fields. There was nothing to see: a footpath, some trees in the distance, and a few chimney-pots. Two young Danes came and stood near me, absorbed in the excitements of foreign travel, and one said to the other with a delighted sweep of the arm, "Isn't that just typically English!" He meant the view, I could see. Gaze as I might, I couldn't discover anything so very typical about it, which annoyed me; and yet I know he must be right, because to me everything, station and fields and sky and all of it, just looked and smelled like home.

Harwich station has had a new coat of paint since we were here last. It hasn't made it any more photogenic, but the repainting confused us so much that we had quite a job to find the Refreshment Room. Ritual demands that we should have a cup of tea

there before the train sets off. We found it at last, though, and got our tea and biscuits, and in there even I could see that everything was typically English: the tea-urns, the array of tall white cups, the unexciting cakes under covers, and a general air of marble and brown paint, though in fact I'm not sure if either item was in evidence. Anyway, it was delicious tea, and I'm now much revived, ready to stare out of the window all the way to London and try to discover what other homely panoramas are going to be singled out by enquiring Danes as typically English.



*'Homely Panorama'*



## PART III

### III

#### LITTLE BOWDEN, FRIDAY

Back at the Rectory again, surrounded by all the familiar sights and sounds which mean home, I have been pottering comfortably about, fading into the family background, and turning once more into part of the Leicestershire landscape. But I find that the landscape itself, or rather its meaning for me, has been slightly altered since I was here last. It's a result of our visit to Denmark, first and foremost. While we were travelling about over there, I was busy—more intensively than ever before, I think—discovering how history is written across the face of the land. I saw the Vikings, the medieval churchmen, the mayors and sailors and princes, the musicians and painters and writers, in the signatures which they had left behind them in town or village or church or palace in different parts of the country. I learned to interpret some of the marks, to know Denmark in depth a little, in the past as well as the present. And now all that past is so vivid in my mind that I want to find its equivalent in England, here in Leicestershire and wherever else we may go.

The East Midlands are certainly the right part of England in which to be attacked by that kind of interest, for they are, in fact, fundamentally Danish. Although I've always known this, its implications strike me just now with all the topicality of *Stop Press News*. Leicester was one of the five Danish boroughs in ninth-century Danish Mercia. Part of the present-day boundary between Leicestershire and Warwickshire is formed by Watling Street, originally the frontier which was supposed to keep the Danes within their Danelaw. The countryside around here is littered with Danish names, from Naseby to Rugby, with plenty more on the way.

But it isn't only the Danes who have caught my interest. The Romans were here before them. Leicester was a Roman fortified city before it was a Danish one, and Watling Street is a Roman road. I have acquired a large map of Roman Britain, and, thanks to it and to the family, I have achieved one of my chief ambitions, which was to get to the spot called High Cross, a few miles south of Leicester, where Watling Street crosses my other favourite among roads, the Fosse Way. There was nothing special to see, except a battered though still impressive monument put up in 1712; but I

felt very pleased to have seen the centre of Roman Britain, and very grateful to my map.

Maps are indeed an essential part of my kind of travelling. I have one or two others, in addition to Roman Britain, which are steadily transforming the local landscape for me. Some are large-scale Ordnance Survey ones, given me for my birthday by request though not without protest. ("I can't imagine what you want it for!") And one is a rather out-of-date cyclist's map, half an inch to a mile, which is better than any more recent one I have found, and which was given to me in Denmark, in Sorø to be precise, by an elderly Russian baron. He'd bought it when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge, in days of legendary magnificence when an undergraduate could keep two hunters and collect eighteenth-century furniture. The present-day Cambridge undergraduate, as far as I can discover, would rather have a motor-bicycle than two hunters, and might find this map inadequate as regards first-class metalled roads; but it suits me perfectly, for Watling Street and the Fosse Way are on it, and the high ground is coloured pale brown and the lowland pale green, and, after all, the hills and the river valleys don't go out of date.

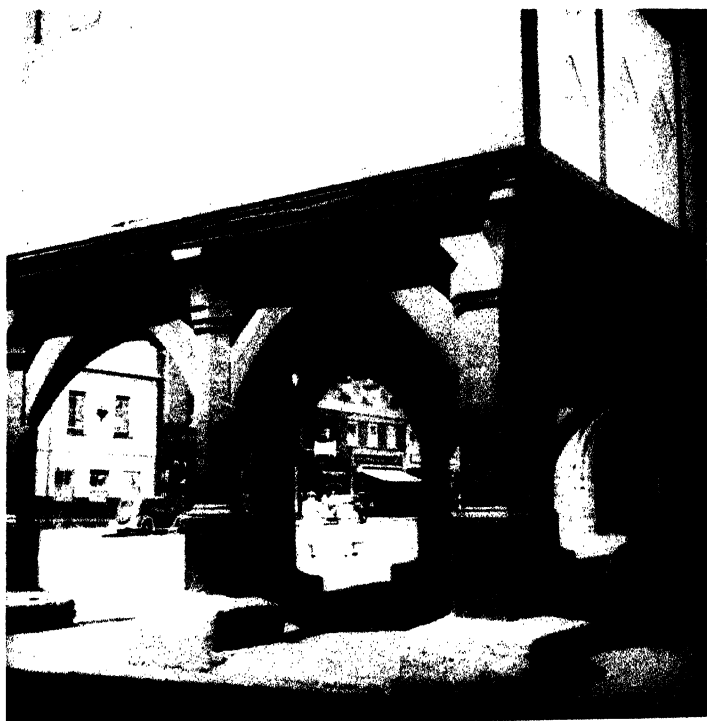
The great thing about this map is that Market Harborough isn't right away in one of the corners. We are generally considered so unimportant that the map-makers push us in, as it were, in any odd corner of the map which they happen to have vacant, so that one might (almost) find "Little" on map 41 and "Bowden" not until map 58. But here, in this antique map, we are given our proper due, with a sufficiency of pale green and pale brown land all around us; and the result is that, at long last, I am enabled to realize that the region is not without its own importance. Even before the Danish invasions and the Roman roads come the basic facts which conditioned the course of history — the actual lie of the land.

Within a very few miles of Market Harborough rise three rivers which reach the sea at points as far apart as the Bristol Channel, the Humber, and the Wash. Just why, in such flat country, the Avon should decide to wind south-west, the Soar northwards, and the Welland eastwards to the Wash, I don't know; but they do, and I feel that this fact, together with the meeting of the Fosse Way and Watling Street at High Cross, ought to give us a good claim to be considered the centre of England. (The claim would





*The Fosse Way at High Cross*



*The Old  
Grammar  
School,  
Market  
Harborough*

not be successful, though; there's an oak-tree in Warwickshire which has walked off with the title, and which we visit respectfully whenever we pass through Leamington.) Among other reminders of the distant past is an ancient ridgeway which, I see, must cross the main road A6 on that pale brown hill over which we drive unthinkingly every time we go into Leicester to shop. Leicestershire isn't a spectacular county, and I don't want to make out that it is — after all, I'm Lincolnshire-born. But, like every other county, it is well worth considering; and with the help of my maps, and in the hope of some car drives, I am considering it as hard as I can go.

Now, quickly, with no other guide than these maps, I'm going to put down what the term Leicestershire really means to me. It's in the middle of England, is vaguely heart-shaped, and has Warwickshire to the south-west, Northamptonshire to the south-east, then Rutland, then Lincolnshire. Farther round than that I don't know what happens; I suspect it's Nottinghamshire and Derby.

Leicester was originally Roman and later Danish. It now manufactures hosiery, woollen underwear, shoes, and other things, is large and thriving, has clean but unbeautiful main streets, and is mostly built of red brick and slate. It is our cathedral city. Leicester has a lot of buses and a De Montfort Hall, and it is where the Rectory family goes to the dentist, and buys clothes. It contains one of our favourite bookshops. The Austin could find its way to Leicester and back with no one at the wheel.

The Leicestershire countryside is full of very green fields with darker green hedges. It is pre-eminently grazing country, which of course explains why so many cattle go past the Rectory on Tuesday mornings. It is one of "the Shires", said to be the best hunting country in England, but of this aspect I know nothing, except for enjoying the spectacle of an occasional meet. The county is richly scattered with beautiful old houses, old villages, and old churches, many hidden far away from the main roads. From the sound of the local speech, if from nothing else, it should be possible to guess that Leicestershire is about half-way from the Cockneys of London to the north-country vowels of Yorkshire.

Leicestershire contains a lot of small brooks and winding rivers, some long and very peaceful stretches of the eighteenth-century canals, and half a dozen old market towns like Market Harborough

scattered in a ring round Leicester. It also contains a stretch of the great limestone belt which goes right down to the Cotswolds and beyond, and it is thanks to this stone, in an otherwise somewhat clayey district, that the older houses and churches and villages are such a striking part of the landscape.

All this is perhaps not so very much to boast about, compared with, for instance, Warwickshire or the Cotswold county of Gloucestershire. I could have written just as proudly of Lincolnshire or of Rutland, if my home had happened to be still in one of those counties. But Leicestershire is a very good county. It contains kindly people and kindly landscapes, and it is very much an entity of its own, even though one doesn't in general know just when one is crossing the county boundary—except, of course, at Watling Street.

After this effort in thinking, even I can see that Leicestershire is typically English. If the young man from Harwich platform were

*My father  
looking for  
the Centre  
of England*



to turn up on his bicycle, I feel I should be prepared for some of his remarks. He would say that the fields had hedges, and that he hadn't seen any co-operative dairies, and I should tell him that two milkmen (one electric) visit Rectory Lane. He'd have noticed that the churches were grey with steeples, instead of white with red roofs; he might ask me some searching questions about new schools and Homes for the Aged, and how do people keep healthy if we have no rye bread, and where's the central heating, and why have the houses such a lot of chimneys, and why do we sit in a draught. And by the time he'd finished I should feel that Leicestershire is even more typically English than I'd thought before.

As for the inhabitants of the Rectory, they may be typically something, but I'm sure I don't know what. It's no good asking Sigurd; he's grown used to the atmosphere. Hanging over the electric wire on the heavy centre beam of the spare-room ceiling is a bit of red wire about two inches long. It's been there since 1945 at least. It serves no visible purpose. The other day Sigurd asked me to tell him "again" why it had been put up. I'd completely forgotten; but when I asked if he wanted it taken down he was quite indignant, which is entirely in the Rectory spirit.

There is an ants' nest in the garden hose just now, Patrick reports. Ants in the hose, bees in the tool-shed wall. . . . Why not? One of the smallest drawers in the spare-room dressing-table is full of model engines. I've never asked why; like anybody else who discovers them there, I just leave them. Similarly, anyone who wants to Hoover the spare-room knows that the electric plug will have to be supported by three books from the revolving bookcase, and anyone with any experience knows that one Charlotte Brontë and two George Eliots are the best selection. And my father whistles his hymn-tune, and we all know that that tune, and only that one, is what he likes to whistle. It begins, and then the study door goes BANG, and then the hymn goes on.

The lawns always need mowing; there is always someone who needs to go in to Leicester. News about the parish, and Market Harborough, and the entire neighbourhood, flows in and out of the Rectory. Some comes in by the front door, some comes in by the back. Some comes via the telephone at the foot of the stairs: of course everyone knows that one has to stop one's telephone conversations while a train goes past. There's a complicated ritual about the evening papers and the front door letter-box which I've

never mastered; it's better never to touch any newspaper there, as it may be waiting to be plucked out of the letter-box from the outside by Mrs. George, who will then push in another one instead of it. Friday is the day for the *Market Harborough Advertiser and Midland Mail*, which is full of vital local information. On Tuesdays Violet often goes to court (being a magistrate), and where are her clean gloves, does anybody know?

On Sundays the whole ritual is of course altered. The church bells ring out at frequent intervals, only two of them, sounding very comfortable and village-like, and my father hurries in and out and is given extra cups of tea. The family knows just when to collect in the hall, in a rather clean condition, ready to go over to the church with hymn-books under its arm. There is a warm, friendly feeling about Sundays at the Rectory, and towards evening people relax and have more time for conversation than on a week-day.

#### LITTLE BOWDEN, TUESDAY

We drove into Leicester this morning, on a number of assorted errands, so I had a good opportunity to refresh my memory of the route and its landmarks. Going through Market Harborough, the family is of course mainly interested in whether there are any acquaintances or relatives to be seen, but I am enough of a stranger to look every time with special interest at the splendid Perpendicular broach spire of the parish church which rises straight out of High Street, and at the old Grammar School standing on stilts just beside it. Then in the wide upper part of High Street we pass a number of beautiful houses, the eighteenth-century residences of doctors and solicitors and other dignitaries of the town. Many have shops on the ground floor nowadays; one is the all-important Food Office where we get our ration books. The old Manor House belongs to Richards the tailor, and one of the pleasures of getting a suit made there is to go for a fitting up the shallow staircase with its worn oak banisters, and to see the old doors and stucco ceilings in the upstairs rooms.

As for the inns we pass—I must go back to the beginning of the drive, for we come out of Rectory Lane between the *Cherry Tree* and the *Greyhound*. In St. Mary's Road there's the *Freemasons Arms*. Right in the town is the ironstone *Peacock* (dated 1783), and near by are two small inns, almost next door to each other, called

the *Cock* and the *Old Crown*. Further up the town come the *Talbot*, the *Hind*, and the famous *Three Swans* with its big wrought-iron sign. The *Red Cow* and the *Nag's Head* are near by (I was astonished to find what a lot of inns there are), and the *Angel* is a little further on. Then we come to the *Six Packs*, a name from the old wool-trading days. By the time one has taken that in, the car is almost out of Harborough; we've passed the canal, and are abreast of Uncle Tom's Night Club, a sort of shack which declares itself to be the 'Transport Workers' Home from Home.

"Established 35 years", Patrick read out as we passed it this morning. "Huh—it's been established thirty-five years as long as I've known it."

Very soon comes Gallow Hill, much more agreeable than its name; and at the bottom of the long slope is the Glue Factory, which may or may not be agreeable to pass, according to the direction of the wind and the amount of unsavoury raw material they have in stock there. Then, over on the right, one sees a handsome square grey church tower rising from the top of a wooded hill. That's Church Langton, which our particular car-load can either think of as a fine Perpendicular church with a fine Adam rectory, or as just the place where Fred and Sybil live.

The first village we come to is Kibworth Harcourt. There's a Kibworth Beauchamp too, very close by, the two surnames no doubt belonging to the Norman families who annexed those pieces of land in or around the time of William the Conqueror. However, Kibworth Beauchamp ("Beecham") is off our customary route, so we pay no attention to it. Kibworth is again principally the place where the So-and-so's live, but with my tourist curiosity I gazed about me and saw that we pass a *Coach and Horses* inn, a *Rose and Crown*, and a *Foxhound*.

Through Great Glen ("that's the corner where Graham had a smash"); through Oadby, where the poor old Hall has been used by some Ministry and looks the worse for it; past the race-course and the bus terminus; and we were in Leicester, driving down Stoneygate. I've just discovered that "gate" is Danish, the same as the present-day Danish word *gade*, which means "street". Leicester has a Humberstone Gate and a Gallowtree Gate, right in the heart of the city, and I've been turning them into Danish and trying to imagine it as a Danish town—but I can't, in spite of the red brick.

The place to park the car (this car, anyway) is in Dover Street, on a bombed site. From there we have to walk down Wellington Street to Belvoir Street (more Normans) and Market Street, where the shops begin. I was glad to see this morning that Messrs. Shakespear, McTurk, and Graham are still in business in Wellington Street—I like their names. Messrs. Somebody else, Boot Factors, are also still there, and I still don't know what a boot factor is.

Tradition demands that the family should make like a flock of homing pigeons for Joseph Johnson's big shop in Market Street. Nobody from the Rectory could contemplate with any peace of mind having lunch or tea anywhere but in Johnson's restaurant; and even there, only certain special tables are accepted by tradition, and if the one special waitress is having her day off there is general consternation. Today everything was in perfect order; and when we weren't running into one another in Johnson's we were running into one another at the Midland Educational, which is a very browsable bookshop.

There's one corner of Leicester which specially fascinates me just now, and Sigurd and I managed to pay a brief visit to it. It's the hub of old Leicester, around St. Nicholas's Church; but it's a busy part of new Leicester too, and one needn't expect to find much that is picturesque among all these warehouses and shops and roaring lorries. But it's something much deeper than picturesque. St. Nicholas's Church, barely separated from the traffic, has been the focus of its parish for almost a thousand years. Parts of it were built before the Conquest, when the Danes had settled down into peaceful citizens and before their cousins the Normans had arrived to disrupt everything again. On one side of St. Nicholas's is a lane called Holy Bones. On the other is a massive piece of walling which is Roman, no less; and next to that is the site of the original Roman Forum.

We hurried round it all—much too fast, but luckily we both know it pretty well and only needed to refresh our memories. For the cathedral, the fifteenth-century guildhall, and the medieval church of St. Mary-in-the-Castle it wasn't possible to contrive time today; but we did get a brief look at the Roman tiled pavement near the Forum. It's in the cellars underneath a little corset shop, which I should think would have surprised the original owners a good deal. I always like to see it, and yet I can never

find much to think when I get down there except that I'm sorry it should be shut away like this and never get any proper daylight.

#### LITTLE BOWDEN, MONDAY

Tomorrow we leave by car for a week's holiday. The house is littered with maps and guide-books. The small suitcases are out again—the ones that went on the trip to Jutland. My father is to be uprooted from his parish and Violet from her household cares, just for seven days, and we are going through Warwickshire and the Cotswolds to Bath.

We shall be leaving the Danelaw before we get to Leamington and the centre of England; but already, from Leicester and Leicestershire alone, I've realized one of the main differences between travelling in Denmark and looking around England. Denmark is all one, homogeneous; its history, its people, its architecture, are *Danish* however far back one may go, in spite of the inevitable influence of neighbouring nations. But England is a hotchpotch. Conquered by the Romans, overrun by the Danes, conquered by the Normans; Christianized from Ireland on one side and from Rome on the other; Britain has been mixed up in European history in a totally different manner from anything Denmark has undergone. It has assimilated all foreign influences at its own slow pace within its island frontiers. One might stand, as I did, in a Roman Forum in one of the five Danish boroughs, looking out upon ground which the Frenchman Simon de Montfort conquered in the thirteenth century, and still feel that everything within sight and hearing was completely English; typically English, in fact.

Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon, Bath, Broadway . . . there is likely to be something of everything I like in such places as these. I don't want to force comparisons with Denmark or the U.S.A. or anywhere else. I only want to keep my eyes open and my mind working. I can't "describe" England, even one little part of it, any more than I could "describe" the parts of Denmark we know. I can only write down that this, that, or the other is what I saw, and that these things interested me for such-and-such reasons. However, in this kind of travelling there's luckily no obligation to make up one's mind. It's much more a question of finding out what is in one's mind, whether new things or old. I look into my



mind much as I look into the viewfinder of my camera, to see what patterns or highlights may be available. The more new scenes the better, of course, within limits; but for me one of the special fascinations will always be that nothing is final, that new parallels, new echoes, new layers of meaning, present themselves all the time as the journey goes on.

#### STRATFORD-ON-AVON, TUESDAY

I could hardly think of a better holiday mixture than sunshine, Shakespeare, and Stratford-on-Avon, and we're having all three today. We're in the fortunate position of being able to take Stratford calmly, for it's such a short distance from Leicestershire that we've all been here many times before. It gives one a fine, leisurely feeling, which I appreciate all the more after the intensity of my Danish sightseeing. We don't have to "do" Shakespeare's birthplace or the Grammar School or Holy Trinity Church or Anne Hathaway's cottage, unless we want to, but can just stroll about, sniffing the fresh air and enjoying the feeling of holiday.

We went for a stroll past the Memorial Theatre, along the banks of the Avon. Everything was very green and very peaceful. The sun was casting long shadows and making bright ripples on the water. There were hundreds, or thousands, of other tourists about, of course, as there always are at Stratford, but I've never seen the town overwhelmed by its visitors, however many there may be. This must, I think, be largely due to hard work behind the scenes by the city authorities; but I think the Avon also has a hand in it, for this broad, serene river always gives a sense of spaciousness, fresh air, leisure, timelessness, no matter how many cars and buses may pour into the parking places.

The Avon was busy, in its own way. There were a lot of swans, looking superior and somehow managing to indicate by the poise of their head that while there was, admittedly, a well-known Swan of Avon, they were the original ones, and the name was borrowed from them. There was a man taking a photograph of the distant spire of the church where Shakespeare was buried, and another man doing a painting. There were two small boys in a rowing-boat, and beyond them I saw something that looked like a ferry (a very un-Danish one) crossing from one bank to the other. There was a launch called *Princess Marina*, with an awning, which

set off well loaded with sightseers to have a look at the church from the river. I feel an almost proprietary interest in the Avon since discovering from the old cyclist's map that it rises so close to Market Harborough. How wonderful that it's grown so broad in such a short distance, that it's famous all over the world, that it flows so steadily and means to go on and on until it reaches the sea—first passing through Bath, where we can inspect with fresh admiration this local child which has made such a name for itself.

Stratford and Shakespeare do suit each other in a very real and abiding way, and I think the better one knows them the more strongly one feels it. To see the old houses which Shakespeare knew, the green fields and the river, must affect ever afterwards the way in which one reads or listens to his plays. I cannot now remember when I first came to Stratford. It must have been when I was a schoolgirl—but I know there was a decisive change in my feelings about Shakespeare after I'd been here. Before then he'd been the name on the outside of some of our school text-books. Some were called "Shakespeare", just as some were called Algebra or First French Course. But there came a time when the name Shakespeare stopped being just print. It came to stand for somebody—a real person—who had stood beside the Avon,



*Swan of Avon*

learned to read from a horn-book in the old Grammar School, gone home from school to a certain half-timbered house. . . . And by degrees these scenes got themselves inside the actual plays, where they still remain, adding a tang of Warwickshire to everything.

In a place like Stratford-on-Avon one is so conditioned, so closely instructed, by guide-books and brochures and all the rest of the tourist paraphernalia, that it takes something of an effort to have any thoughts of one's own. The guide-books say this, that, or the other is beautiful, striking, historical: we come along in a great hurry, our head aches, our feet ache, we want a drink—all right, it's all beautiful and striking and historical, if they say it is, and that's fine. Now we've done Stratford, and where can we get a meal? The trouble about Stratford, or the good thing about it, according to how one feels, is that all the guide-book superlatives are true. One can't quarrel with them—at any rate not on a fine summer day like today; and one would have to be very ingenious to invent any that have not been used a thousand times before. Down by the Avon I was wishing very much that I could stop a few of the tourists and ask them what they really thought about Shakespeare's town; but they'd only sound like a guide-book, just as I should myself if I tried to describe it all.

The most fascinating time I've ever spent in Stratford was one summer when I really got in by the back door, so to speak, the entrance which a tourist can seldom find. I was staying with some friends at a little village farther along the Avon, and for them Stratford was the place where one went to shop, just as Market Harborough or Leicester is for us. There were, admittedly, tourists in the town, and my friends went to the plays during the Festival; but the shops they frequented had nothing in common with the souvenir-baited windows into which I've been peering today.

I drove in with them one morning, in their very old car, and we went to the ironmonger for something for the garden, and to the butcher. Then they had business with a lawyer, so they took me along to a very pleasant garden and suggested that I should wait for them there. I duly waited, sitting on a bench in the sun and admiring a fine display of flowers and a smooth green lawn.

I'd no idea where I was. It was quite by accident that I afterwards discovered I had been sitting in Shakespeare's own garden.

Just how or why I can't explain, but that half-hour or so in the garden of New Place has come to mean more to me than any of the official guide-book sights of Stratford. We must go in there tomorrow if we can, but I'll be quite satisfied to be a tourist this time, and exclaim with due horror at the wickedness of the man who pulled down New Place house because the tourists annoyed him so, or the town council, or whatever it was, and admire the mulberry-tree which, though not the original New Place mulberry-tree, is nevertheless a direct descendant of it.

Talking of the mulberry-tree, I've seen another descendant a long, long way from Stratford-on-Avon—in Central Park in New York. There's a Shakespeare Garden there, right in the middle of the Park but still well within sight of the skyscrapers. I remember how impressed we were to discover it, on one of our first Sunday strolls in the New World. The New York Shakespeare Garden is supposed to contain the flowers mentioned by Shakespeare, in so far as they can manage to thrive in a climate which is very unlike that of Warwickshire; and there was the descendant of the New Place mulberry-tree, looking quite at home.

It must have been about the same time that I had another unexpected encounter with Shakespeare in New York. I'd been wandering about in my favourite museum, the Metropolitan, and had found an unusually long queue when I went to the cafeteria to get some coffee and a sandwich. I happened to hear one of the waitresses saying to a museum guard that she couldn't think why it was so crowded today. He answered, "Well, it's Shakespeare's birthday".

I think that Shakespeare would have enjoyed that, just as I'm sure that he would enjoy watching *Hamlet* at Kronborg. He belongs to Stratford in a very definite way, but he could no more be limited to Stratford, even in one's thoughts, than Hans Christian Andersen could be limited to Odense. In fact I find I've been thinking quite a lot about Hans Andersen today, for reasons which need no elaboration. Universal genius, world-wide fame, birth-place, relics, reverent paragraphs in the guide-books. . . . Both of them richly deserve it all, but they'd wear their fame with a difference. If Hans Andersen could return to Odense today, I can just imagine the zeal with which he would conduct the tourists on

their pilgrimage to his shrine, telling them of his sufferings, his feelings, his inspiration, till the tears ran down everybody's cheeks (including mine, if I could be there). Shakespeare too would thoroughly enjoy taking a party of tourists round his birthplace, but he'd do it in a different manner. He'd seem so ordinary that no one would look at his face with any interest; they'd simply think that he was one of the guides. He'd say his piece, and they wouldn't notice anything special. He'd put in one or two perfectly staggering new items, either truth or falsehood, and they wouldn't notice them either; but after they'd all gone he might be discovered in a secluded corner laughing quietly to himself.

We are staying in a hotel which was an old house when Shakespeare was born—it's said he must have passed it every day on his way to school. We are going to the Festival Theatre tonight to *Much Ado about Nothing*, in which I shall see John Gielgud, whom I last saw playing Hamlet at Kronborg. For these few hours in Shakespeare's town I have come from the neighbouring county of Leicestershire, but also from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, and also from the other side of the North Sea. I can only say that it's well worth all the journeying. Stratford-on-Avon means more to me now that I have found links with it in the U.S.A. and in Denmark; just as any places I may see in those two countries mean more to me rather than less because one of my fixed points of reference is the green English Midlands.

#### BATH, THURSDAY

There is a special spice of pleasure about seeing for oneself a city which one has hitherto only known from books. I've known Bath for as long as I can remember, bookishly speaking, but it has undeniably been something of a drawback that I'd never actually set eyes upon it. I knew where Jane Austen stayed, and the characters in *Persuasion*, where the Pickwick party and Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* party put up, and how Beau Nash used to direct matters at the Assembly Rooms. Going by the book, I might be said to know what the Roman Bath looked like, and the West Front of the Abbey with its angels climbing up long stone ladders, and the famous squares and crescents and all the rest of it. But now I know what Bath looks like in reality as well as in photographs, and I must say it's given me a number of surprises.

The chief fact which has been concealed from me is that Bath is largely built on the side of a terrific mountain. One may study a street-map until one is blue in the face, and still have no idea of this startling basic truth. If one took up the map and bent it in the form of a tall V, with the Avon at the bottom of the gorge, it would give a more veracious view of the situation. Our hotel is on a beetling crag high above the city—we'd have liked to be down in the heart of everything, but officialdom in various forms is occupying all the central hotels, which I feel is rather hard both on Bath and on its tourists. So each time we want to go sight-seeing we have to drive down hair-raising slopes and back again. It's easy enough when one has a car; but I begin to have a high opinion of the actual physical strength and mountaineering ability of Jane Austen's heroines.

Anyway, we get a wonderful view from our eagle's nest up here. I don't know exactly how high up we are, but I suppose somewhere on a level with the summit of Denmark's Sky Mountain. We look down over the chimneys of Royal Crescent and the adjoining streets, and then straight across to the distant skyline of the hills on the farther side of the city. Sigurd and I have been for a stroll up to Lansdown Crescent near by—at least he said it was a stroll, but to me it seemed a steepish bit of climbing. When we got up there I really did feel that I was walking in history: history all mixed up with the present day, which is the way I like it. We passed the houses (he needed three) in which that notable eccentric William Beckford used to live. They looked absolutely discreet, sober and well-bred like all the other houses in the Crescent, and it was strange to think what gossipings and murmurings and head-shakings must have been indulged in by the neighbours when Beckford lived there. In the dining-room of a house a little farther on, a family was having supper, and a ground-floor room near by was obviously some kind of students' library.

The Lansdown Crescent houses have beautiful wrought-iron entrance gateways; the framework meets overhead, and in the centre is a lamp. I could very easily imagine any of my favourite characters coming home to an entrance like that. It was late twilight as we walked along up there, with the lights of Bath spread out in long rows below us. Venus was all alone in the sky, extremely bright. She was up above the balustraded roofs of

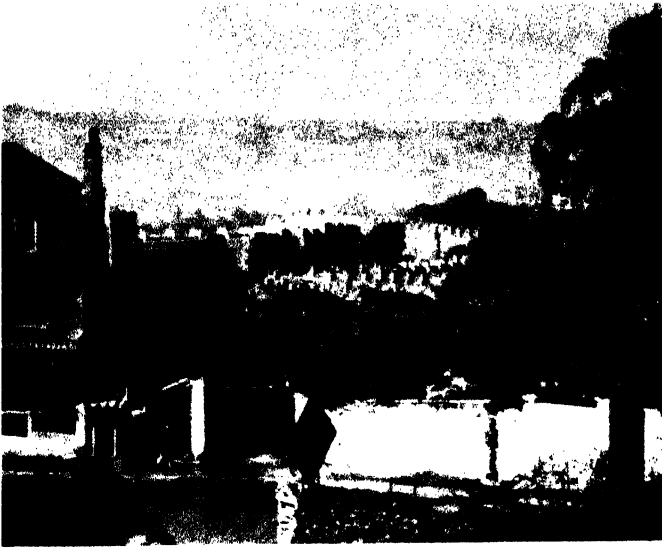
Lansdown Crescent, and as we walked back she skipped along with surprising agility from one set of chimneys to another, coming down a little lower each time until finally she disappeared behind the roofs.

That was Bath as I'd hoped to find it. Having seen it now in fine weather, I don't mind admitting that when we got here last night my first and strongest reaction was that I wanted to go home at once. It was pouring with rain. We'd been driving through increasing rain and wind ever since Cheltenham; we'd seen nothing of Bath at all except wet mountain-sides; and here we were, on our crag, exposed to the full force of the gale, with every window rattling and the rain splashing down as if it never intended to stop. For some reason or other I just gave up hope. Yet this morning the sun was shining brightly, even though the gale has not quite spent itself. We've had a wonderful day, and though I won't put down what I think of Bath in bad weather, I do now think that it is beautiful when the sun shines.

Bath Abbey is magnificent - one simply can't imagine the town without it. It's like a cathedral, and in fact might well have been one, only owing to some ancient ecclesiastical disagreement the bishop of the see resides at Wells and has the diplomatically balanced title of Bishop of Bath and Wells. It was good to see the Abbey for myself, to take in with my own eyes the soft colour of the Bath stone, the grace of pinnacle and window and flying buttress, to see how the tower rises up above the walks along the Avon.

We stood outside the west door in the paved space called the Abbey Churchyard, and once again I felt that we were standing right in the middle of history. A few paces in one direction, the Abbey, with the Avon beyond it. A few paces in another, the old Pump Room, into which we dutifully went to admire its treasures and drink a glass of the spring water. (Had we been a little later we could have had a cup of coffee for elevens, which just then would have interested us considerably more.) Behind the Pump Room were the different baths, and along the other edge of the churchyard were little old shops—among them an umbrella-maker who I felt would be likely to do a pretty brisk trade.

There can be practically no one in all the long history of Bath who has not at some time or another stood on that spot where we



*Bath from  
Lansdown*



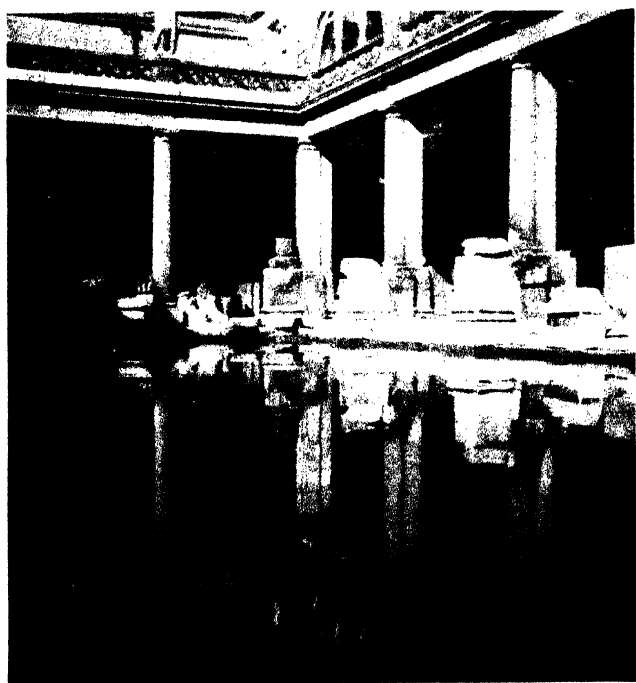
*Bath Abbey*



were standing this morning. And it is a long history, and a crowded one. Just how long it is I realized with fresh impact when we went inside the building behind us, along a corridor and down a staircase, and found ourselves beside the Roman Bath.

The water in the Roman Bath is greenish, and so hot that it steams. It's still running in busily in one corner, just as it was when the Romans discovered the springs and built their bath here about two thousand years ago. Some books tell me that the Romans founded *Aquae Sulis*, the Waters of Sul, in order to enervate and make indolent the Britons whom they had conquered; other books picture the shivering Roman officers, in this distant outpost of the Empire, clustering round the nice warm water, and jumping into it, in the hope of re-creating here in the wilds a little of the more clement atmosphere of their native Italy. I dare say the truth was a bit of both, and I should think that Romans and Britons alike were thankful for free and unlimited hot water when the rain settled down over Bath on a south-west wind.

If there were any Roman ghosts about by the bath this morning I should imagine that their first longing would be to put a bevy of



*The Roman Bath*

underlings to work on bringing everything into good Roman order. The pillars need to be put up, and the right capitals poised again on top of them; and there are a number of altars, dustily huddled in the background, which would need to be re-dedicated to the proper gods in the proper places. A Roman ghost, if this were his first job of haunting here, might be surprised to find clearly mirrored in the green water the tower and pinnacles of a fifteenth-century abbey; and I think he would be surprised (as I was) to see a lady sitting sketching on a camp-stool in one corner, with a black umbrella up to shield her work from the sun. He might also have been surprised, come to think of it, to see me taking photographs.

When I was looking round for a good place to take a snapshot, I saw a young man behind me who was also aiming his camera at the water, so I asked if I was in his way. He said No, and then enquired what shutter-opening I meant to use. I said f.8, and he said so did he, which made us both (I hope) feel rather clever. Then, as I was moving away, he called out, "Stay where you are, Monica!"

The family stared at me, and I stared back at them and then at the young man, who was undoubtedly a total stranger. Then we saw that on the other side of the bath a young woman was standing beside a pillar. She wore green trousers. She was obviously Monica, and she stayed where she was, as ordered, and we went on.

No matter where one travels, one needs a selective eye and a lot of patience. The rose-coloured spectacles with black stripes which I invented in Denmark would be just as useful in Bath as in any other place. No doubt it has always been so, but people are so clever at omitting things in photographs and sketches and travel-books and guide-books that one has to go to a place oneself in order to see the genuine background of each particular Sight. All around the old streets of Bath there are waves and waves of red-brick or stone suburbs, and garages, and railway-lines, and all the things that one has to have in twentieth-century civilization. In point of fact, I look at them all with the keenest interest, for they are Today, and Tomorrow too, and Yesterday wouldn't be much good without them; but in my tourist and photographic

capacity I reserve every right to try and keep the garage and the gas works out of my viewfinder. It takes a good deal of arranging, sometimes.

A problem which Jane Austen's heroines never had to face is that of parking the car. The carriage came for them (or didn't come, if their parents were displeased with them), and that was that. But in the centre of Bath today we found it practically impossible to get rid of the car and get on with our sightseeing. That's the sort of thing for which I'd be prepared in New York or London, but there's nothing in the books to suggest that one ought to expect it in Bath. All the streets were crowded with cars and buses, and all the parking places were full. At last we found a side-street where we could leave the car, across the Avon, over the bridge lined with shops which I later discovered was the famous Pulteney Bridge. As we walked away from the car I looked up and saw that we were in Laura Place. Immediately I forgot all the botherations of the last twenty minutes; for this was where Sir Walter Eliot's cousin, Lady Dalrymple, had a house for the season, as every Janeite knows, and I almost felt that I had had the honour of entering her aristocratic portals myself.

Not very long ago, when I was talking to a friend about Bath, she said that her father always used to enjoy coming to Bath "because he had so many naval cronies there". That's exactly why Admiral Croft used to like coming here when Jane Austen wrote *Persuasion* in 1816. Bath goes in for continuity in a good many different ways.

We were buying some soap in another Jane Austen street when I saw behind the counter four large wooden jars of herbs labelled COLTSFOOT, ARCHANGEL, LADIES' BEDSTRAW, and SELF-HEAL. I commented on the beauty of the names to the saleswoman, and she assured me that Ladies' Bedstraw was a very good remedy for sleeplessness.

#### BATH, FRIDAY

In one short day I've seen parts of England which I'd never even thought of as accessible to me: places I've known in mind ever since I was a child and now, all of a sudden, as an unexpected

gift, know in reality also. We just suddenly decided to drive across the Mendip Hills and have a look at Wells Cathedral and anything else we might fancy. It's as simple as that, when once it's within the bounds of possibility. We didn't know the way—no matter. All we had to do was to walk across Orange Grove and into a stationer's shop, and buy a map. And very soon there we were, driving along the top of the windswept Mendips, with not a care in the world.

It's wonderfully empty up there—the emptiest part of England I've seen for years. Then we came down on the other side of the hills, and there was Wells, which turned out to be astonishingly lovely. The cathedral in its huge green close is everything that an English cathedral ought to be. I don't know how long we wandered about there, and in the chapter-house and the cloisters, but I do know it wasn't nearly long enough. We went on to admire the towers of the bishop's palace with the broad moat beneath them, and when I saw the swans on the moat I hardly



*Wells Cathedral*

knew whether I was really in Wells or only wandering in the photographs of a book I used to love very much when I was a child.

From Wells we drove on to Glastonbury. I realize that this might be just another place for anyone who was not brought up on Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*; but I can't remember a time when I did not know about King Arthur and his knights, and I could scarcely believe my eyes today when I realized that I was looking from the car window at the Isle of Avalon and Glastonbury Tor. The Tor rises in solitary grandeur from the flat country round about—a fine sight quite apart from all its associations. If there'd been time (but what tourist ever has enough time?) I'd have dearly liked to climb to the top of it, and stand by the tower and look out over King Arthur's country. However, as a brisk, kindly stranger said to me while I was in vain attempting to get a snapshot of the Tor, there's really no point in going up it. "You'll only get your head blown off, and there's nothing to see when you get there—except the view, of course."

Glastonbury Abbey was surrounded by such a hubbub of motor-buses, cars, snack bars, crowds, and so on, that we fled without stopping to look at it, and drove on through strange, flat, marshy country to our next objective, which was Cheddar Gorge. We meant to drive up it, and so return to Bath across another part of the Mendips. When we got to the foot of the Gorge our courage very nearly failed us. Around the entrance to the Gorge and the Caves there was a conglomeration of trippers such as I've seldom seen before: a dense crowd of cars, buses, and holiday-makers, fringed with cafés and souvenir shops. More and more big buses were pouring down the Gorge every moment. We unanimously agreed to give the Caves a miss, but Violet valiantly turned the car into the first slopes of the Gorge, in spite of all the traffic. At first I doubted whether we could manage it at all. I think we passed about fifty buses, and they were large and coming down the hill, and we were small and climbing up it. However, we did get past; and then, with blessed suddenness, we were right out of the populated holiday area and up on the lonely slopes.

It was as striking as one could ever have hoped it would be. The road wound on and on, up and up, in a grassy chasm with huge, haphazard grey cliffs piled up on either side. Road and grass and cliffs and sky: nothing else for miles, except an occasional



*Cheddar Gorge*

car. Then gradually the cliffs became lower, and disappeared. We were out on the top of the hills again. We could see from our map that we had crossed an old Roman road, leading to the hilltop mines from which the Romans used to get lead. Then down the slopes again, and through a village called Harptree. In no time at all we were back in Bath, safely perched on our mountain crag, having tea and talking over a drive which I am never going to forget.

#### BATH, SUNDAY

The River Avon has done handsomely by us on this trip. First we had it at Stratford; then we saw it in much increased grandeur flowing under Pulteney Bridge and through the city of Bath, and we crossed it when we drove to Wells by a bridge which I'm told is seven hundred years old. Now we've met it again at Bradford-on-Avon. Until yesterday "Bradford" meant Yorkshire to me, and "on Avon" meant Stratford, so a Bradford-on-Avon was a kind of hybrid not easy to imagine. But now I've been there, and it's lovely; even in the rain it was lovely, and that's saying something for even the most picturesque of towns.

Bradford-on-Avon is all built of its own local stone, in the old central part anyway, and it rises up the steep hillside above the river in a hugger-mugger of mellow stone houses of every shape and size—and every period too, apparently, but they have all settled down together in a most harmonious manner. There was an old stone bridge across the river, with a small rotund stone building growing out of one parapet which I understood had once been a chapel. But what fascinated us most of all was a Saxon church. It is a gable-ended, comparatively inconspicuous stone building, made of the same grey materials as the much larger medieval church just below it and the later stone houses near by. One goes in through a tall, narrow door to a high, narrow nave, and through a tall, narrow chancel arch (not much more than a yard wide) to a small, high chancel. By a mixture of accidents this church has been preserved intact for a thousand years. It couldn't fail to impress one. I saw two lively boys absorbing, with every appearance of genuine interest, a lot of information about it which was being given to them by a grown-up companion (an uncle, I felt). My father stood for a long time outside it, regardless of the drizzle, staring first at its weather-beaten walls and then at the parish church across the road, and then back again, deep in thought.

We had lunch at the *Swan Hotel*, which had the date 1500 written on its cheerful front. We seem always to be lunching at Swan Hotels on this trip, or else admiring swans in person on very Shakespearian stretches of water. This particular *Swan* was the kind of inn where Pickwick would have been well advised to stay. It was thoroughly snug everywhere. When we were running in by the back way, to avoid a particularly heavy downpour of rain, we saw beside the yard door a large bell which is still marked "Ostler"; and at the first landing on the staircase there was a blackboard, marked with the room numbers, on which were chalked the times at which the people staying there had ordered their early tea.

The solitary waiter would I thought have acquitted himself admirably if he had been called upon to serve Mr. Pickwick. At one point he misheard a remark I was making to the family, and asked me with a kind of friendly interest, "Did you say you was going to throw yourself into the river!" After he'd hovered about the lunch-table for some time, he asked where we came from.

*The  
Sivan Hotel*



My father said "From Leicestershire", but I could see the waiter wasn't satisfied. He hovered a little more, and then Sigurd said to him, "I'm a Dane, though". The waiter was much relieved. "I've been trying to make out what kind of a twang you had, sir," he said, "but I couldn't place it!"

Near the hotel there was a shop sign which perplexed me almost as much as Sigurd had perplexed the waiter. It said:

Footwear **UNCLES & SON** Specialist

Before I'd got that really sorted out we drove past another one which said Furnish at **KNEES**. Somehow the surnames hereabouts seem more exotic than those in Leicestershire, but perhaps it's because I'm not used to them. My aunt was saying this morning, apropos another local name, "Could one *bear* to be Mrs. Duck, I wonder?" I think that for sheer, romantic comfort I should like to be Messrs. Rich & Cooling and to live at Temple Cloud, or, failing that, at Midsomer Norton, all of these being names I have noticed near here.



The goddess of sightseeing, if there were one, would be an enormously capricious creature. I could hardly imagine anyone more unreliable, and I have a sneaking feeling occasionally, when trying to be a tourist, that she arranges everything as topsy-turvily as possible just to annoy. The days which above all days ought to be fine and memorable turn out drenchingly wet, and then suddenly a glorious, idyllic summer day is put in where it was never expected, and provided with people and scenery to correspond. The headaches, toothaches, noisy hotel bedrooms, or whatever other nuisances there may be, are distributed with something more ingenious than a mere disregard of one's convenience; and very often the specially good things are proffered in such an astonishingly awkward manner that one has to have all one's wits on tiptoe to enjoy them at the exact and perhaps solitary moment when they *are* enjoyable. I've noticed this in Denmark as well as here, and just as much in Canada or France or any other place where I've happened to be trying to sightsee. And today I've seen the system in all its erratic glory.

This morning we drove off, on an impulse, to look for an aunt of mine and her family whom I had not been able to meet for years. We'd never even connected their new address with the country round Bath, until someone had a bright idea and we looked it up. It proved quite difficult to find the way; they had no telephone as yet, and the only useful signpost was half broken away. However, we found the house at last, and received a warm welcome, though naturally a somewhat startled one, my aunt supposing that I was in New York. And there we were, without previous planning or intent, strolling about in a green, quiet garden in the very heart of one of the most beautiful parts of England. On one side of the garden there was rolling English pasture-land, with an old stone farmhouse sheltering at the foot of the slope. On the other side was a square, grey church tower of serene and confident beauty. There were ripe blackberries growing on the chancel wall. Bath might have been a hundred miles away, instead of five or six, and New York seemed to belong to another world entirely.

Then, in the afternoon, we went to a village which we had been told we simply must not fail to visit: Castle Combe. All the guide-books agreed with my informant; it was beautiful, romantically situated, an architectural gem, utterly unspoiled. Our route from



*At Stanton Prio*



*From the  
Fosse Way*

Bath lay largely along my trusty old friend the Fosse Way, which has dogged our footsteps on this tour even more faithfully than the Avon. It was grand to be on the Fosse Way upon unfrequented uplands, meeting an old turnpike stone in one place and in another the big Three-Shire Stone which marks the meeting-place of Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. We drove down into Castle Combe in a properly expectant mood. The first sight of it was indeed lovely: grey houses beneath a thickly wooded hill, a stream, an old stone bridge, and a village street leading up the slope.

There were very few people about, and only two or three cars, so we strolled through the village in a leisurely fashion, selecting different houses to live in and wondering what it was like in the winter. We came to a market cross with a pointed stone roof, and beside it a trim, modest *Castle Inn* which was the nearest thing to a castle we found. We went into the church, and finally had tea in idyllic surroundings at the old manor house, which has had to turn itself into the Manor House Country Club. It was scarcely four o'clock. Everything was quiet and peaceful, but the waiter surprised us a little by saying that he'd give us our tea early, and in a particular retired corner, before the rush began.



*Turnpike Stone  
on the Fosse Way*

About half an hour later we strolled back to the market cross. It was almost invisible, dwarfed by buses and charabancs which, with long rows of cars, were jammed along the village street in every direction. A motor snack bar had arrived and was doing a busy trade. There was a good deal of shouting and hooting, as more visitors were arriving every moment. With some difficulty we got clear of the main traffic jam, but down by the stream there was another one. As we climbed the slope out of the village we passed a steady stream of newcomers, all hurrying along to enjoy the genuine, unspoiled beauties of an ancient English village. If we had arrived half an hour later than we did, I think we'd have gone away in despair, as we did at Glastonbury.

I certainly don't know what the moral of all this is, for Castle Combe or for any other place. Nobody would wish them not to be beautiful, and if they are beautiful it's very natural that tourists should want to go and admire them, just as we did. In point of fact, I suppose the invaders are only there in force for comparatively few hours in the week, and the rest of the time the community is able to live its own life at its own pace. When we lived in Hampstead during my childhood we had little or nothing to do with the big Bank Holiday fairs which for a lot of Londoners are the only reason why Hampstead Heath exists. We just retired behind our various garden walls until the crowds had gone home again. But if ever I could get the goddess of sightseeing on my side, particularly in the matter of weather, I should travel round England in the middle of the week only, and mostly in the morning. The week-ends could be spent very comfortably sitting on a nice green lawn in the sunshine, with a view over the Fosse Way on one side, the Cotswolds on the other, and a river just below, with swans on it.

#### BATH, MONDAY MORNING

Bath has an extraordinarily strong personality. Partly, no doubt, it's because so much history and so much literature are connected with it—but they wouldn't have come here in the first place, so to speak, if there hadn't been something to attract them; and that something, I now feel, is not only the hot springs, not only the Avon and the hills. Bath has a *genius loci* so potent that it can ensnare all visitors, or practically all (Smollett hated it, I



*Castle Combe*



*The Castle Inn and Market Cross*

remember), and make them ultimately excuse every shortcoming, from traffic congestion to rain.

How glad I am that I didn't (in honest, practical truth I couldn't) turn and flee away from Bath on that first wet evening up here on the slopes of Lansdown. It's wet again now, and I'm taking a last look at all the varieties of wet roof and chimney and pavement and hillside which are visible from the hotel window. In half an hour at the most we shall be leaving. I've begun to understand this view now. Far from wanting to leave Bath today, I'd like to stay in the city for a long time and get thoroughly familiar with everything saturated in the atmosphere, even though that would presumably also mean getting saturated with rain. Still, I'm taking a lot of things with me. I'm taking (in a manner of speaking) the Abbey, the Roman Bath, the Pump Room, and the King's Bath, plus the knowledge that these mountain uplands around the city are referred to by the hardy inhabitants as Downs. I know the exact street-crossings at which Jane Austen's young ladies met or failed to meet their admirers, the houses where they stayed and the views which they enjoyed. And my mind is full of green country and quiet villages, of Mendips and Cotswolds, of the Fosse Way and Wansdyke and the Isle of Avalon.

It is by the Fosse Way that we shall be leaving Bath, *en route* via Cirencester for Broadway. The Fosse undergoes a lot of changes in its long course across England, but the names which have got fastened on to it in Bath are a particularly strange selection. In a few minutes we shall be driving past them: Balustrade and Walcot, London Street, Vineyards, Kensington, and Piccadilly. I shall be extra sorry to leave the part called Paragon, between Hay Hill and Guinea Lane; partly because I like the name, but still more because it's where Jane Austen stayed on her first visit to Bath.

However, all these regrets are of the most comfortable kind, not in the least poignant, but just noticeable enough to show that our visit to Bath has been a success. I'm still looking forward, not back; forward to the Cotswolds and the Rollright Stones today, and Leicestershire tomorrow. I'm also looking forward to the day when I have enough leisure to begin looking back, but that is too complicated a thought to embark upon just as we're about to leave Bath.

## MORETON-IN-MARSH, MONDAY AFTERNOON

At last we have seen the prehistoric Rollright Stones, which some say are older even than Stonehenge. They took quite a lot of finding. We finally drove up beyond Chipping Norton on to a deserted country road on high ground—an ancient trackway, it appears. We left the car by the roadside, walked through a low gateway, and found ourselves in what would have been a completely ordinary Midland field—except that it contained the Rollright Stones.

They are the most extraordinary stones I have ever seen. They are of many different shapes, some tall, some low and crouching. They seem to be bent and contorted with the weight of their knowledge of things past. Pitted with dark holes, overgrown with patches of pale lichen, they stand in a wide circle in this most ordinary-looking hilltop field. The visitor can only gaze at them in astonishment, and find nothing to say.

There is another stone, standing all by itself on the other side of the road: the King's Stone, taller than a man. It has that same brooding, secret look, and that same air of being totally unmoved by the present day, even though it has unfortunately had to be



*The Rollright  
Stones*

enclosed within high iron railings. The road is a county boundary nowadays, so that the Stone Circle is in Oxfordshire and the King's Stone in Warwickshire. Somewhere a little farther away there is a dolmen consisting of five stones in a group by themselves. We didn't have time to see them, but I've seen enough, anyway, for the Rollright Stones to mean a great deal to me from now on. There are legends connected with the stones, of course, but they seem in their present form just rather foolish. The stones are much too grand for quaint stories about Whispering Knights. The only bit of lore that has interested me is the legend that the stones cannot be counted. I hope to go back to them one day and see for myself if that is true.

I'm writing these notes while we are having our tea on — by way of a change — the Fosse Way! It's been dodging in and out of our ken ever since we left Bath. At Cirencester, where the Thames rises, we were on the Fosse: had lunch on it, in fact, and spent a happy half-hour exploring the church and gazing at the shops. After that we departed from it, because of the Rollright Stones: but now, as if we couldn't keep away, we are back on it again, and here it has been transformed into the broad main street of the little Cotswold town of Moreton-in-Marsh.

There's a huge cat sitting snugly under the tea-table, and a huge teapot sitting on the table, and there isn't much room for us and our belongings. The tea-room is crowded, and I'm much distracted by the interesting conversation going on at the neighbouring tables. Especially tantalizing is the talk of two men who cannot possibly have come from anywhere but Oxford. They have a grievance against somebody, and it seems that they have had to come and have tea at Moreton-in-Marsh on purpose to talk it over. They're speaking loudly and clearly, but so are a lot of other people, and every time I think we're reaching the *dénouement* somebody puts down a tea-cup with a crash or makes a loud, unnecessary remark about the weather.

#### BROADWAY, MONDAY EVENING

If anyone had asked me how I should like our week's holiday to wind up, I think I should have said with a thoroughly snug evening at the *Lygon Arms*. In fact I must have said it, for we planned for just that, many weeks ago; but holiday plans so



seldom work out according to expectation that I reckon it as a major surprise when once in a blue moon they do so. We are all comfortably installed in this hotel, which is not only beautiful to look at, both inside and out, but is also thoroughly up to date in such matters as bathrooms. It also provides something which I've never seen in any other hotel: a small shelf of *interesting* books in each bedroom.

We haven't much time to read, though, for we're all too busy talking. This is a great reunion, in its own quiet way; my friend Mercy is here, and there is a lot to be said, and less than twenty-four hours to say it in. We've been spending the evening since dinner in the snuggery, or whatever it's called: a small room with a large open fireplace in which a large fire is burning. There are no doors, only heavy curtains which we have drawn across the two doorways; but no one has been in to disturb us—there are no more chairs, anyway. We have been able to gossip at our ease, with no sidelong glances from fellow-guests who pretend to be absorbed—as we should ourselves, in similar circumstances—in *The Tatler* or *Country Life*. It's raining tonight, which effectively excuses us from moving from the fireside.

There'll be time to look at Broadway tomorrow morning—and, anyhow, we don't need to look at it with desperate concentration, since we've seen it before. I love Broadway, though I dare say that those two Oxford men at Moreton-in-Marsh would shudder if they heard me say so. The only trouble about Broadway is that too many people like it. It suffers from its beauty in the same way as Castle Combe and all the other attractive places which can be easily reached by cars and buses. I hear that the people who live here are seriously concerned about the week-end crowds, and so should I be if I lived here. All I can say just now is that I'm very sorry I'm an invading tourist, but I *am* enjoying Broadway on this wet Monday evening; and tomorrow, after having admired it in the discreetest possible manner, we shall climb back into AUT 490 and unostentatiously remove ourselves from the landscape.

#### LITTLE BOWDEN, TUESDAY EVENING

We are safely back at the Rectory, and already, after a very few hours, are beginning to wonder whether we have ever really been away. The Austin is resting in its own garage, in company with

Patrick's motor-bicycle and the bicycle on which Diana has been to school. The latest news of parish and neighbours has been received and commented upon. Patrick says the potatoes have done pretty well. Diana reports that gym has been *smashing*. Trains keep roaring past on their way to London – very soon we shall have to embark on one of them, and set off via London for New York. It is market day, and we have all been extra careful to shut the drive gate because of the cattle.

This old, old house has without effort pulled us back into its orbit. No such thing as a tourist can exist here; the house doesn't know anything about such creatures, even though it is – I now perceive – so like a Cotswold house that it could be put down in Broadway or Chipping Campden and cause no comment at all.

We paid a visit to Chipping Campden this morning, just for the fun of it. We drove there over the hills from Broadway, past the lonely *Fish Inn* on the summit of Broadway Hill; and then, after a thoroughly enjoyable wander in Chipping Campden, we drove back to Broadway for lunch. I put down these details to convince myself that it was really only this morning. We drove home through familiar places, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, Rugby, but we didn't stop anywhere, for we were not tourists any longer. A nod to Shakespeare; a brief uncertainty about the route through Rugby, during which I puzzled over a notice which said "Wet Fish Daily"; a nod to Watling Street as we crossed from Warwickshire to Leicestershire. The holiday was over, and we reached the Rectory triumphantly in time for tea.

All the special little sounds and oddities of the Rectory are weaving their familiar spell. Well, yes. . . . We did go to Bath, once. We did see Wells and Cheddar Gorge and Castle Combe and such places. But this is *the Rectory* – don't I realize? That was the evening paper coming in through the letter-box, or else going out, whichever it may be. Auntie Jo is going to feed the birds, and how are we off for bacon this week, and did we know Diana has to have a *blue* macintosh now? And perhaps we ought to go to Leicester. I must settle back into the landscape again, and let other landscapes look after themselves for the time being.

## PART IV



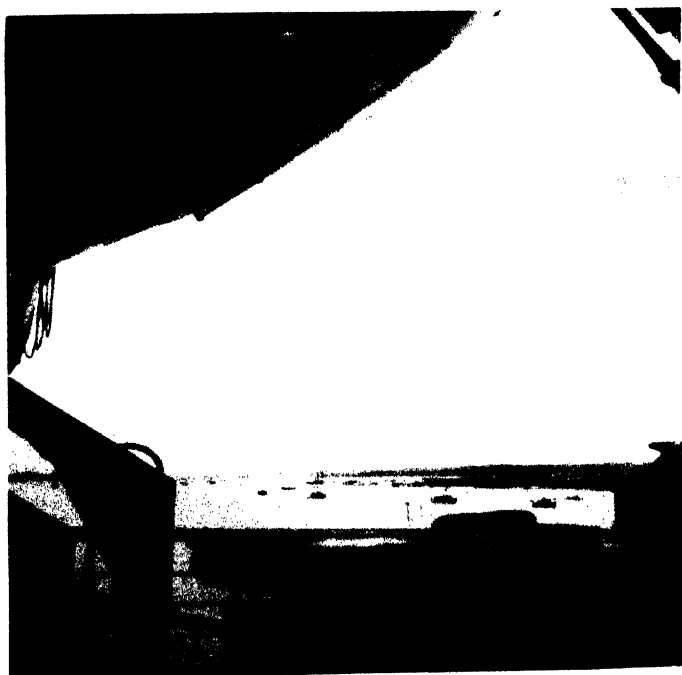
## IV

SOMEWHERE ON THE ATLANTIC OCEAN, SOME TIME IN  
SEPTEMBER

If I were a *Paragon*, I should like to go along *Billyboys Lane* and down *Hay Hill* to *Washpool*, *Unsuitable for Motors*. There I should collect a *Ready Token* in *Guinea Lane*, have a *Cold Bath* at *Bourton-on-the-Water*, and afterwards go into the *Vineyards*, sit down under *The Cherry Tree* on a *Woolpack*, enjoy my *East Liberty*, and play on my *Harptree* to banish any feeling of *Souldrop*.

The next thing would be to fortify myself with *The Grape Vine* and a *Shoulder of Mutton* in a *Porridge Pot*, with of course some *Wet Fish Daily* and a *Civic Virtue Cake*. After that I might feel able to begin tidying up *The Six Packs*, the *Folding Church* in its *Box* and the *Holy Bones* in their *Hop Bag*, the *Eight Bells*, the *Three Compasses*, the *Hat and Feather*, the *Happy Scissors*, and all the rest of the luggage which *Wayfarers* so light-heartedly acquire, never stopping to consider that it will take up almost as much room as an *Elephant and Castle*.

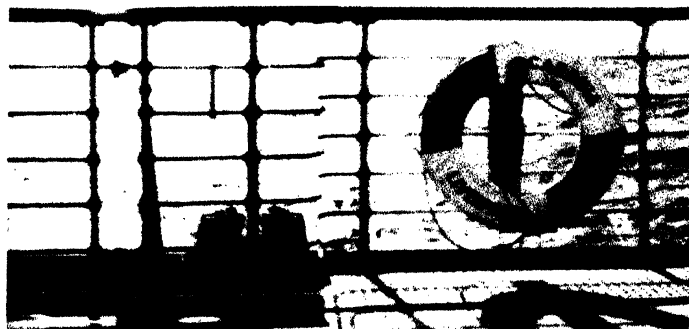
Southampton  
Water from  
R.M.S.  
Caronia



But I am no paragon; my luggage, though ample, is not as ample as all that; and this fit of nomenclature has only been brought on by trying to sort out the papers and pictures I have amassed on our holiday. For weeks and weeks I've hardly believed that such a thing as leisure existed. I scarcely even wanted it to exist; there was so much to see and hear, we had so many old friends to meet and so many new places to visit, and thanks to all the days I wasted in convalescing (or rather in failing to do so) there was a perpetual lack of time for everything. There's leisure here, though, on the *Caronia*. Supreme comfort, a cabin full of gadgets and light-switches and bell-pushes, a stewardess who looks after me so well that it's been worth another bout of non-convalescence just to experience it—and leisure, nothing but leisure all the time.

The papers are getting sorted into unexpected splendour, since I have been given a leather brief-case of a kind which I never imagined that an ordinary person could possess. It smells wonderful, it has a surface like tawny cream, and inside are pockets labelled with all the letters of the alphabet. So I'm pushing everything into the proper pockets: Aarhus, Bishop Absalon, and the Avon, Bath, Bellevue Beach, Bethel Conn., Broadway Wores, .

*On the  
Atlantic*



and all the rest of them. I find, though, as I pursue this simple pastime, that I'm sorting not only brochures and picture post-cards, but everything that I have stored up in my mind from our trip. It turns out to be quite a sizeable job.

Psychologists have never explained, as far as I know, how the human head, which is at most seven or eight inches wide, can contain an apparently limitless amount of memories. I remember feeling, in the days when I had to cram for examinations, that if I learned any more facts and dates they would begin to run out of my ears. Those items evaporated immediately the examinations were over; but here I am now, with a whole summer of new things to think about and remember, and there seems to be plenty of room for them all. Ah, it's a puzzle, me dook, as we say in Leicestershire. Still, the great thing is that here they are; and, as I've noticed before, they all interact in some strange way inside one's mind all the time. Bjernede Church in Denmark (to remain in the B department) took on a new meaning, several weeks after I'd seen it, when we went to see the Saxon church at Bradford-on-Avon, and the city of Bath is having repercussions all over the place, from Ribe and Elsinore to the row of Jane Austens on my bookshelves at 1155 Park Avenue.

It's astonishing how the weather of the last few months has improved already, in retrospect. Already I can only remember the rain as something rather comic. I shall soon have quite forgotten that I wore heavy tweeds for about nine-tenths of the summer, and a cotton dress only two or three times in all. Other drawbacks, whatever they were, are also being purposefully forgotten, or at any rate only kept in the picture to give a desirable contrast of light and shade. Of international worries, crises, gloomy forebodings, there have been enough and to spare, all the time. There was never a day when we could look at the morning paper without anxiety and distress. But if one waited for security nowadays before venturing to enjoy oneself; if one turned aside from happiness or new experience until peace, goodwill, and justice were prevalent in the world; well, one would have to wait a very long time, and might not have done the world any particular good by insisting on being sorrowful. This trip of ours was a holiday; and neither world affairs nor bad health nor bad weather can prevent me from putting on record that I was very often very happy.

What I find in my mind, first and foremost, is an array of landscapes appropriately peopled. "Landscape with Figures" would serve as a title for all of them. Whether that is the way most people remember a holiday of this kind I just don't know. I'd have thought it was, as a matter of course, if it weren't for a shock I got, many years ago, when I was staying with a friend in the South of France. Another friend came to lunch, and they began to talk of different parts of France, mentioning one name after another that (for me) was full of history and romance. Then they got to Caen. "Oh, Caen!" said the visitor tenderly and longingly. "That's where we had that exquisite roast duck!" She fell off her pedestal with a bang, as far as I was concerned; but she gave a very helpful jolt to my unsophisticated mind.

It's a fine mixed crowd of landscapes that I have to sort, and they don't come unattended. Kronborg Castle, for instance, comes (to some extent) in lonely majesty, with complex towers and a bevy of clouds and not a soul in sight; but it brings, as if on a sound-track, the words of Hamlet and the questions of a tired English tourist. I am out on the ramparts, I can feel a fresh breeze from the sea, and I find myself wondering again about Tycho Brahe and the alderman down by the harbour.

If I think of Wells Cathedral I get the wide, lonely sweep of the Mendips into the bargain, with a Roman lead-mine, an inn called the *Castle of Comfort*, crowds of trippers at Glastonbury and Cheddar, and a row of seven ancient burial mounds by the roadside which made me wonder for a moment if we'd slipped back into Denmark. The Royal Stones of Jellinge are clear and sunlit, with Danish history thronging all around them and the waitress at the inn politely telling us that the cook was going to be displeased about our appetites. And beside the big Runic Stone in my mind, from now on, I shall always find the King's Stone from Rollright, so like it and yet so very different.

The views from many different windows line up in front of me, so that it's quite a surprise when I look away from my thoughts and see only a porthole containing a round piece of the Atlantic Ocean. I see in my mind the red roofs of Ribe and the tops of assorted Danish trees: wet rooftops in Bath, the Battersea Power Station, yellow Danish trams, red London buses, the snow-covered Labrador mountains, the gate of the Rectory drive, and the silky blue waters of the Sound at Klampenborg on a sunny day.





*The King's Stone,  
Rollright, England*

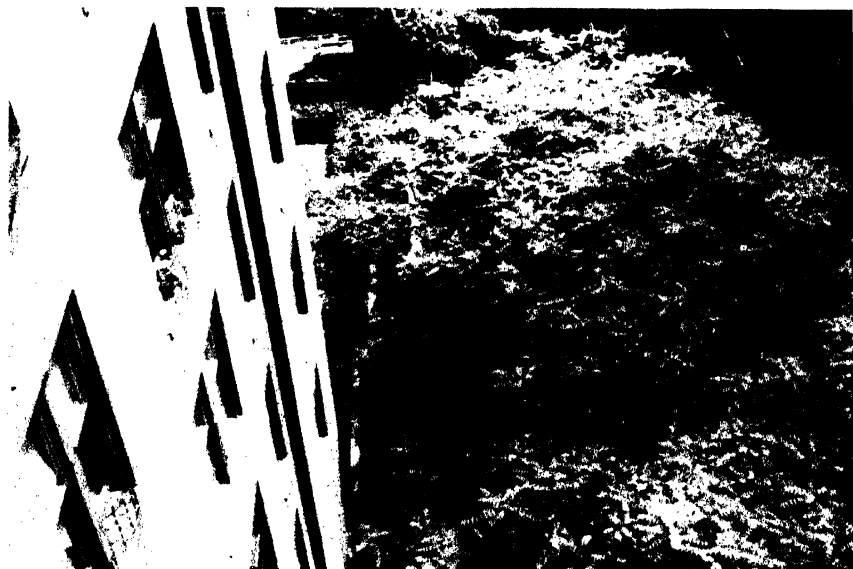


*Royal Runic  
Stone,  
Jellinge,  
Denmark*

If I look out of the side windows of 1155 Park Avenue when we get home, I shall be looking down on to the tops of sumach-trees; those long, symmetrical, feather-like leaves have become for me a kind of shorthand symbol which means New York and New England. And if I look out of the front windows, and see one of the innumerable processions brewing up, I shall often catch myself thinking of the Changing of the Guard in Denmark or in England, or of a country procession of Danish Riders at the Ring.

As I survey all these different things I realize that they are turning into a sort of map. In fact a map is a landscape, of a synoptic kind, though my maps contain a good deal that would be difficult to put in with a mapping-pen. In a way this holiday has consisted of several maps, one on top of the other. In Denmark the Danish one was uppermost, but there was an English one behind it, and by holding them up to the light, as it were, one could see all sorts of unexpected resemblances and variations. In England there was a Danish one behind the English map, for the same purpose. The United States could also be seen on occasion; and maps of Roman Britain, Danish Ancient Monuments, and so on, were always instantly available.

Comparison is the spice of the whole matter, but it proves thoroughly unrewarding if one travels with a measuring-rod and



*Sumachs from the Sixth Floor, U.S.A.*

still more so if the measuring-rod is stamped with one's country of origin. Hans Andersen exactly hit off the drawback of this in his story *Elf Hill*, when the old Mountain Troll from Norway arrives at the Elf Hill with his sons.

"Is that a hill?" asked the younger boy, pointing at the Elf Hill. "In Norway we should call it a hole in the ground!"

When I travel about I like to be surprised, I like to get the "smell" of a new scene or district, and I like to admire things in terms of the local enthusiasm, reserving only an inconspicuous right to be silent once in a way. So my comparisons are unregulated, and my maps are much more likely to have dolphins in the corner than scales of mileage or classifications of roads.

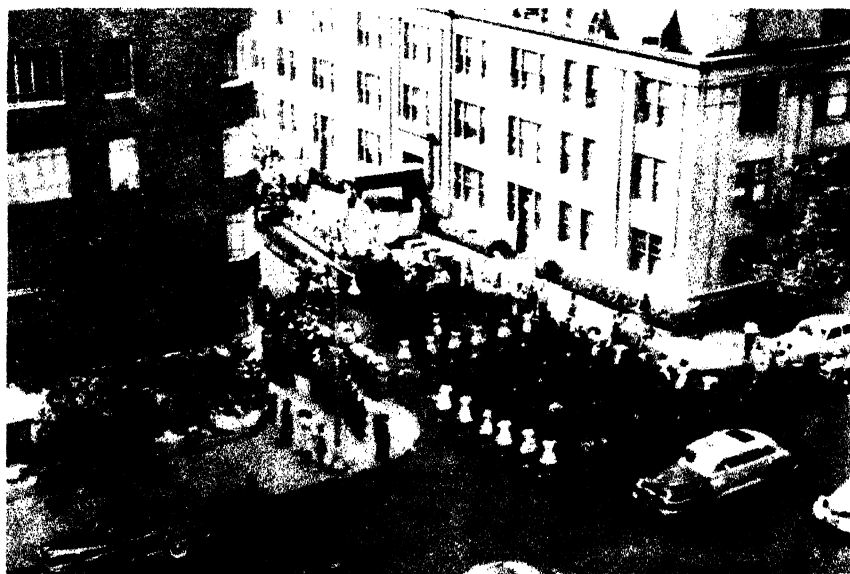
By thinking a little of the hills I know in each country, and then of the rivers, towns, churches, and other features which have specially interested me, I find that my holiday landscapes come out in the proportions which for me are the true ones, and that comparison, if courteously treated, does help very much to bring out the individuality of the different scenes.



*Sumach Shadow, Connecticut, U.S.A.*



*Procession in Jutland, Denmark*



*Procession in New York, U.S.A.*

With regard to hills, for instance, the special pleasure which they offer in Denmark is that of looking down from them. To go up any Danish hill increases to an astonishing degree the feeling of space and pure air which one gets from those wide panoramas of farmland and sky and the gleam of water. That's why Sky Mountain means so much to Denmark, and even a sand-dune will do a lot on occasion.

In England, views of that particular kind are rare, but the hills have more surprise value, and I must say I enjoy a bumpy horizon. There's always a chance in England to wonder what is over the brow of the hill, and walking back up a steep hill when hot and tired is a disciplinary feature of existence which the British know very well, but which Danes in general are spared.

As for the U.S.A., in Connecticut, in a view which we know well, there are three highish, rounded peaks in the middle distance. Nobody could tell us what they were called; nobody was even much interested. They were just some hills. There must be hundreds like them in New England, and of course in comparison with Rockies or Great Smokies the son of a Mountain Troll would consider even those mere holes in the ground. When at last, after much searching, we found a name for the hills on an out-of-date map, we also found that all three of them were double as high as Sky Mountain.

It's the same with water. Denmark's Kongeaaen, the King's Stream, isn't the Niagara River or the Housatonic—but it doesn't need to be. It has a clear personality of its own; it's a part of Danish history; and one would rightly go out of one's way to admire it in Jutland even though for a stream of similar width in New England the car would not so much as slacken speed. Denmark's strong point in the way of water is, of course, not rivers, but the omnipresent fjords, edging their way deep into the landscape all round the long Danish coastline. I am so conditioned now to expect water in a Danish landscape that I feel almost wronged if it is absent; whereas in England a lake is a rarity, to be visited with respect, and instead of flat fjords or open beaches for seaside I expect cliff-edged bays with real tides, and about three rows of waves in each bay. In the United States—perhaps because America itself is so big—I specially like the big, long, powerful, leisurely rollers which sweep in from the Atlantic Ocean.

What one admires with regard to water, come to think of it, is



*Lake Mohonk and the Catskills, U.S.A.*



*The Lake from  
Sky Mountains,  
Denmark*

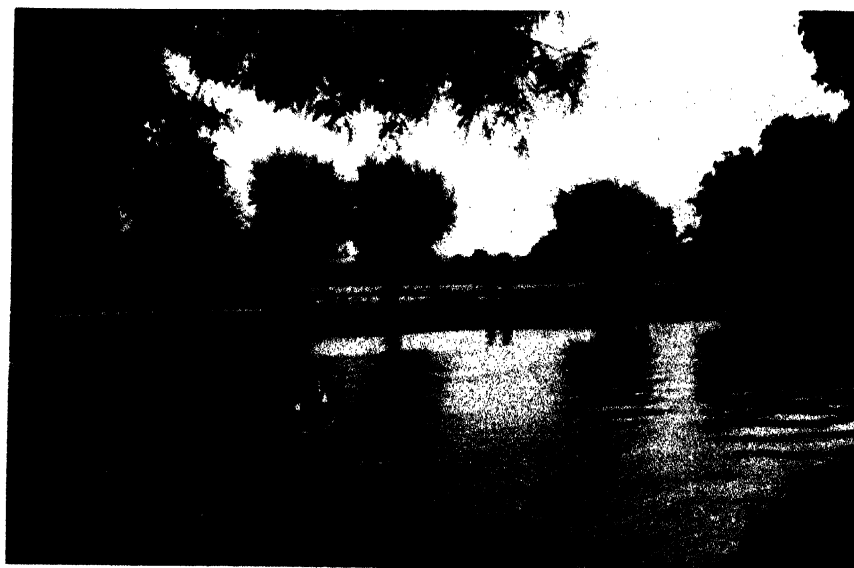
*The Shawangunks,  
U.S.A.*



*From the Malvern Hills, England*



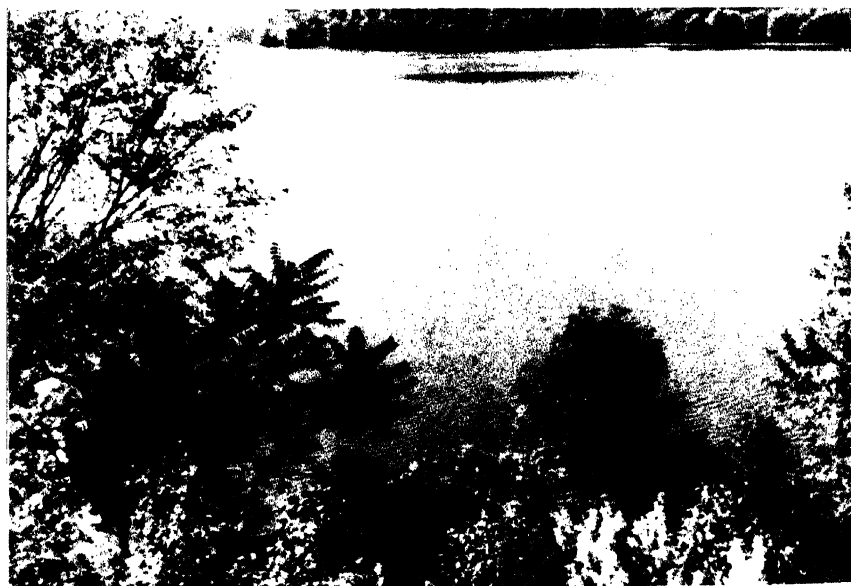
*The King's  
Stream, Jutland,  
Denmark*



*The Avon at Stratford, England*



*Sorø Lake,  
Denmark*

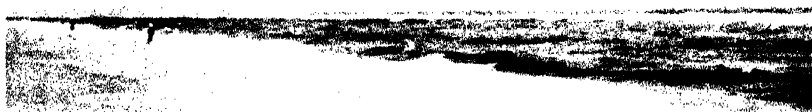


*Lake in New England, U.S.A.*

not only the fluid itself, but also what it reflects and what surrounds it. The moment I determine this point, the memories present themselves with sharp individuality. There is the broad, tree-shaded Avon with Shakespeare's church and his Festival Theatre reflected in its water and superior swans admiring themselves. Kongeaaen reflects huge Danish clouds as it winds between Jutland pastures. The lake at Sorø frames itself in willow-trees, and in my mind the pattern they make places itself alongside the fernlike design of sumach leaves against a wind-ruffled American lake. The Severn at Worcester leads up to the cathedral like a broad processional highway, and the moat at Kronborg, with its very different meaning, has something of the same deliberate rhythm. The steaming green waters of Bath are aloof in a frame which the Romans made for them. The Copenhagen canals are very adaptable, willing to mirror anything from rococo architecture to the sale of a dozen eggs.

Bridges, equally varied, may range from ancient, narrow stone bridges in the Cotswolds to Denmark's Little Belt Bridge, from the long George Washington Bridge over the Hudson in New York to the shop-lined eighteenth-century Pulteney Bridge in Bath. There is plenty of room also for all the different Danish ferries I saw, some large and some small, some packed tight with sunburned holiday-makers, one containing a single passenger and his bicycle.

As for roads, pride of place must go to Watling Street and the Fosse Way, laid out across England by the Romans and meeting each other in Leicestershire. At least once in Denmark also we followed the course of a very old road -- *Hervejen*, the Army Way, which led from North Jutland via the neighbourhood of Jellinge



*Atlantic Waves, U.S.A.*



*The Severn at  
Worcester,  
England*

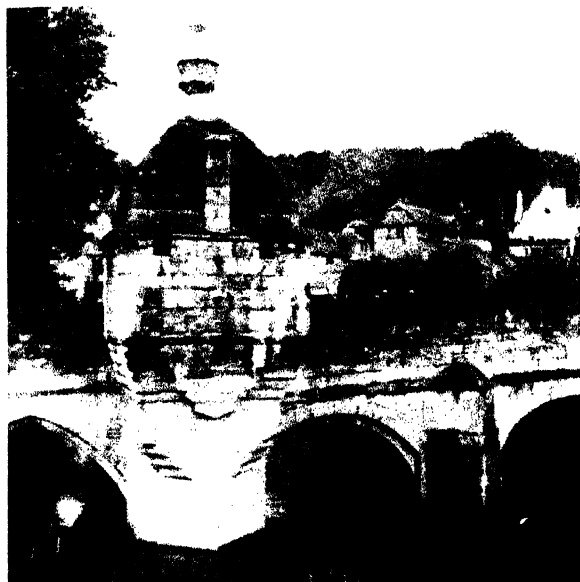


*The Moat at  
Kronborg,  
Denmark*

to Ribe, crossing Kongeaaen as we did at Folding Bridge. I must also have in that ancient ridgeway on the Oxfordshire boundary, along which we drove to look at the Rollright Stones. Finally, for variety, I will put in four more roads. Holy Bones in Leicester, on ground which Romans, Danes, and Normans all trod in their turn. The Philosophers' Walk in Sorø, where the shades of Ingemann and Hans Christian Andersen stroll in illuminating conversation. Broadway (not the one in Worcestershire but the one in New York City), with its lights and crowds and its reputation for glamour, which wanders diagonally across the chequerwork of the New York street-plan because it was originally an Indian trail. Finally, Rectory Lane in Little Bowden, along which the cattle have gone to market on a Tuesday morning for anything up to seven hundred years.

The towns might begin in pairs, for the sake of interest: Elsinore, with its medieval churches, its eighteenth-century mansions, and its shipyards, and Stratford-on-Avon, where Shakespeare's spirit and pastoral England between them are a match for any number of trippers. Then Sorø and Wells with their cloistered green spaces, Bath and Ribe with their histories written in stone and brick. Copenhagen and London together would keep me thinking for years if I stopped to dwell on them, so, having charted their existence, I shall go back to less complex places. Market Harborough and Leicester must of course be centrally located, with the family routes clearly marked. Then I must find a space for the little town of Newtown, Connecticut: partly because of its wide, tree-shaded main street, built on a slope and a little reminiscent of Burford, and partly because I've been told it has three hundred miles of roads to keep in repair—a problem which might cause surprise in an English or Danish parish.

Churches and cathedrals stand out for me as boldly as the hills, and for several similar reasons. I like churches, first and foremost because they *are* churches, places of worship. They are focal points of their community, and have mostly been so for a very long time. They are more often than not finely situated, and almost all the ones I saw have beauty, dignity, and interesting associations. If one tries to imagine an English or Danish town or village without a church in the centre, one sees how much, and



*Chapel on the Bridge  
Bradford-on-Avon,  
England*



*At  
the American Falls,  
U.S.A.*

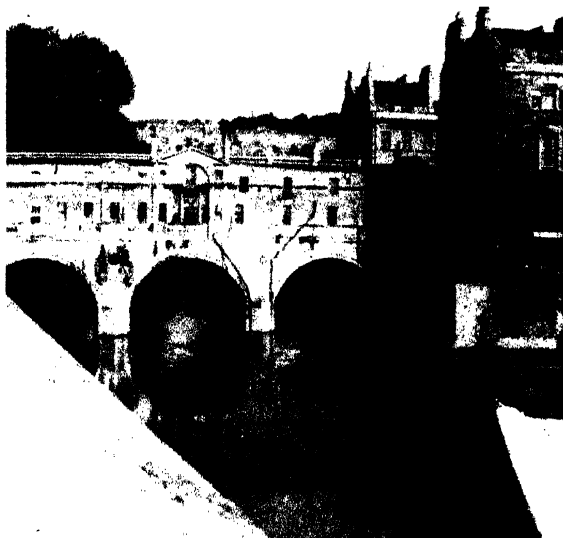
in how many ways, it is the church which holds the whole design together.

Here also I like the countries mixed up, to gain from juxtaposition. I think of grey Midland spires such as that of Great Easton, lit by the evening sun: of the white towers of Denmark with their red-tiled roofs, like those I saw at Vester Skerninge and Dover and a score of other places. (That reminds me that the Danish name for a church porch is *vaabenhus*, weapon-house, which seems to have a distinctly Viking ring.) Along with these I will put the white wooden churches of New England, and the grey wooden church to which we drove to admire in Canada because it was a hundred years old. For contrast again, the tiny oblong Saxon church of Bradford-on-Avon, which has stood for almost a thousand years; and the round church of Bjernede, where eight hundred years ago a man who had started by building in stone changed his mind and finished in the fashionable brick.

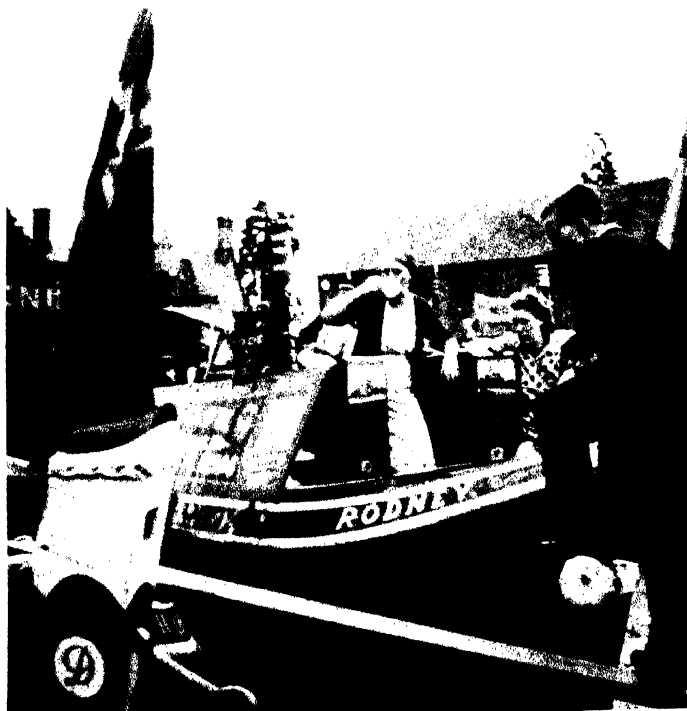
There can only be room for the outside look of churches here, and, even so, only a few out of many: for the towers and spires which stand out with special clearness in my mind's eye. They soar up from every kind of edifice, large and small, in every kind of setting and every kind of light. There are Christian IV's slender green copper spires on Roskilde Cathedral, and the square towers of the West Front of Wells Cathedral, looking out over the huge green Close. There is the high grey dome of St. Paul's in London, dominating Ludgate Hill and the City; and the green dome of the Marble Church in Copenhagen, which faces the King's Palace and the harbour. Ribe Cathedral and Malvern Priory, the green-and-gold elegance of Our Saviour's in Copenhagen, the low white church at Jellinge where the Stones are, the tall broach spire of Market Harborough, the comfortable tower of Stanton Prior, the complex splendour of Bath Abbey: I remember all these and many others, and am greatly the richer for having seen them.

I collected ten pages of inn names in England, so there are plenty to choose from. The following might be the first to be sprinkled along my roadsides:

*The Squirrel, the New Bear, and the Old Horse, with the Roebuck, the White Lion, and the Blue Boar. The Swan, the Black Swan, and*



*Pulteney Bridge.*



*On the Grand  
Union Canal,  
England*



*Great Easton Church  
England*



*Vester Skerninge  
Church, Denmark*



*Church in Newtown,  
Connecticut, U.S.A.*



*Church in Georgeville,  
Quebec Province, Canada*



*Malvern Priory  
England*



*The Marble  
Church,  
Copenhagen,  
Denmark*

the *Railway Swan*. The *Jolly Farmer*, the *Shepherd and Flock*, the *Cricketers*, and the *Saracen's Head*. The *Horse and Jockey*, the *Mariners*, the *Pride of the Valley*, *Our Mutual Friend*, the *Green Man*, and the *Green Dragon*.

What the inns are like inside I mostly don't know. The names are there because I like them, because they are so very English, and because it is pleasant to remember the excitement of collecting them, peering out of the window as we drove through each new village or town, scribbling down every name I could catch, and trying to interpret my scribbles in the evening.

In the matter of old inn names Denmark can't compete with England, but there are heraldic animals in the Danish streets all the same. I have a *Hart*, a *Lion*, a *Swallow*, and a *Swan*; a *Bear*, a *Dolphin*, a *Falcon*, a *Pheasant*, and a *Black Horse*. They sound convivial enough; but in fact they are the names of Danish chemist's shops, those wonderfully dignified apothecaries which give an air of academic grandeur even to the purchase of twenty aspirin or a bottle of cough mixture.

After all those poetic names it might be as well to remind myself of the darker side of the picture. Here is a list which I made in my notebook months ago, before the summer began. It was based on memories of a previous journey, before I'd fully learned how many things one should not, and need not, expect of a holiday. Also, I think, it was an attempt to stop myself looking forward too much.

## WRONGS

Travelling is *not* delight. Any or all of the following are pretty sure to be wrong almost always:

WRONG weather- too cold, hot, windy, sultry. If right, wrong engagements to allow you to enjoy it.

WRONG clothes in wrong suitcase at wrong moment. Wrong shoes especially.

WRONG noises - phones, radios, ventilators, buses, trams, voices, hooters; and at wrong times.

WRONG beds. Too hard, soft, wide, narrow, etc. Wrongly placed. Wrong bedclothes and pillows.

WRONG chairs, wrong lamps, wrong cupboards, wrong bathroom arrangements.

WRONG food—too rich, too scanty, too slow, too frequent, too foreign, too dull.

WRONG feelings in stomach: probably wrong medicines for this.

WRONG bus times, train times, accommodation available.

WRONG people gone away when you want to see them.

WRONG book at hand when you want another one.

However, not even all those warnings could prevent me from continuing to look forward to the holiday. And I know now, by detailed experience, that even a whole page of wrongs need not mean that one's holiday was anything but a success. None of the wrongs are things which I want to remember, except in a detached and philosophical manner. Their only place on my map would be as a sort of warning footnote, in very small print.

#### NEW YORK, THURSDAY

We landed early this morning, in sunny weather which would have done credit to an English or Danish July, though it's almost October. While I was waiting in the customs shed alongside the *Caronia* I happened to notice the hat of a woman who had come to meet some friends. It was trimmed with half a dozen zebras, each dancing merrily at the end of a six-inch wire. Seeing a hat like that, at eight o'clock in the morning, I knew for certain that I was back in New York.

It proved pleasantly homelike to get back to the flat. The door-men on duty welcomed us with a warm handshake, which did almost more than anything to prove to me that this too is a home-coming. After the first incredulous stares at our home it was pleasant to go round and take possession again of desk and dressing-table and other familiar items whose very existence I had almost forgotten. It was pleasant to be greeted by Frøken Andersen's savoury cooking smells, and a cheerful face still brown from the Danish sunshine. It is pleasant, too, to know just where each thing can be put away as it is unpacked; though I must say I'm baffled to find that we have already collected out of the various suitcases something like eighty books.

The Manhattan traffic is having the day's first frenzy of hooting.

There will be others, especially the one between 5 and 6 p.m., when people want their cocktails, or have had them. This sound still reminds me of the perplexity with which I first listened to the New World from a hotel room near the busiest part of Fifth Avenue; but by now I am enough of an old hand for it to remind me even more of such details as the housekeeping. Do we need anything from the market, for instance? By market I do not (of course I do not) mean a dusty square in some English or Danish town, noisy on certain days with the shouting of stall-holders, the lowing of cattle, the hooting (European hooting) of cars or buses. I mean a food shop lined from floor to ceiling with everything we could possibly need for meals or the household work: everything from canned soup and frozen brussels sprouts to butter or strawberries. Most things, as in England or Denmark, are priced just below the round figure, to make one believe one is paying less. I've put away my English shillings and pence, my Danish kroner and øre, and with them their attendant set of thoughts, and now I'm scraping around in my mind to see if I can remember whether 29 or 39 or 98 cents is the correct price-level at which to be shocked about the various foodstuffs.

I turned on the wireless to find out how much heat and humidity we may expect today. I was slightly surprised to hear the weather forecast being broadcast by courtesy of a brand of cleansing powder. Only slightly, though. Soon I shall with comparative calm accept my Mozart and Bach and Haydn mixed up with offers of underwear, television sets, chocolate, and beer, and my only reaction will be, as before, to turn down the radio the moment the advertisement begins, and determine anew never to buy any of the things they offer me.

There are enormous stacks of the dullest possible letters awaiting us—printed matter of every kind, and often three or four copies of each circular. It will take hours to sort it all out and see if anything worth while is buried in the rubbish. Letters—real letters, air-mail ones—have become very important again now, and my feelings towards the velvet-cushioned bench outside the front door will vary according to whether there are any real letters lying on it in the mornings or not. The glass-fronted letter-chute is its old self, and down that will go my letters to Little Bowden or London, Sorø, Copenhagen, and the other parts of my summer landscape.

In point of fact, let the taxis hoot as they may, I am still to some extent poised between the Old World and the New. Merely to think of those letters takes me back at once to the houses where they belong, with friendly front doors standing open, and gateways leading to gardens (probably wet). The stack of dull circulars is apt to fade out in favour of a mud wall with bees in it, or a copper beech, or the echo of talks with my friends. I go about the flat listening, as always, for the trickling sound of a leaky pipe or some other plumbing disaster, for this is a very old building – thirty years old, ripe for pulling down, they say, and the pipes are equally antique; but at the same time I am constantly aware of other homes which are a good deal more than thirty years old. I hear the click of a latch in Denmark, children laughing in an English paddling pool, children asking searching questions about American cars. When I replaced an electric bulb just now (there are six or eight which expire at regular intervals, as they have to be kept lit all day) I found myself remembering how excited I got about the sunlight in Sorø and in Denmark generally, and instead of making a note to buy some more sixty-watt bulbs I was wondering in detail what Hans Andersen would have written about New York.

The view of Park Avenue from our windows is just the same as ever. Glancing down, I replace in the front of my awareness the broad, straight avenue with its traffic-lights and its straight, regular side-streets, the dried-up grass down the centre, the tall apartment buildings, the Brick Church, the yellow taxis, and all the rest of the view. It's the same, and yet it will never be quite the same again, because of all the other views I have seen since I studied it last. When I look out of the window now, I can add to this view any other one that I fancy, from a medieval house in Ribe, with a man dusting the front, to the Battersea Power Station or a wedding at Aarhus Cathedral.

On occasion it is no doubt important to think of only one thing at a time, but I shouldn't care to make a habit of it except when strictly necessary. I know I must order some electric bulbs and remember to call them lamps, but I am also busy wishing I knew who put up the Rollright Stones. The Ring-riders come in procession again down the lane outside Graasten Palace, watched intently by three little Princesses. A tiny boy has got stuck again in the railings round the populous top of Sky Mountain, and is

crying for his mother; the Malvern Hills are dodging about from side to side as the London train gets near them. At the same time as all this, I listen to the New York traffic (now calming down) and hope the maples and sumach and dogwood will soon be turning red. It won't be many months before the dogwood blossom is out again here, which means spring as decisively as the unfolding of the beech-leaves does in Denmark or the coming of the daffodils in England.

I started this holiday with a fine selection of hopes, many of which I scarcely even expected to have fulfilled; but it gave me a great many things which I hadn't expected and couldn't have foreseen. Denmark means more to me now than it did; so does England; so do the United States. I've travelled hopefully, I've arrived, and I've gone on again many times during the past months; and each stay has made me a little richer in those memories which make history, geography, holiday, and literature come alive for travellers, and which are a basic ingredient in the way we shall think about the future.







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